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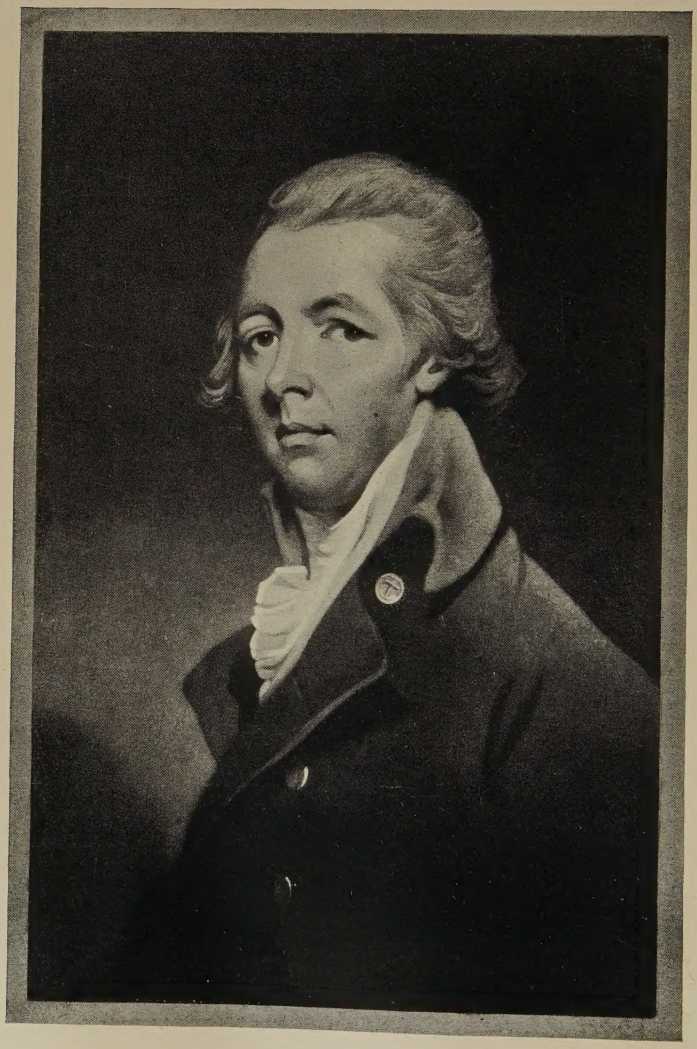

WILLIAM PITT

From an engraving by H. S. Good, after William Owen (principal portrait painter to the Prince Regent)

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A SHORT LIFE OF WILLIAM PITT

BY

J. HOLLAND ROSE, LITT.D.

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PREFACE

When my publishers requested me to write a short life of Pitt, I soon perceived that such a work, far from being a mere abridgment of my *Life of Pitt*, published by them in 1911, should aim at presenting a new survey of the subject and a brief review of the evidence which has recently come to light. In the meantime important sources, such as *The Spencer Papers*, *The Letters of Lord St Vincent* (Navy Records Society), the *Papers* of Windham, Wellesley, and Bathurst, and the *Farington Diary*, have appeared, besides monographs by different authors on certain aspects of the period. All these I have studied for the present volume. My contributions to *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy* (vol. i.) have helped me in that sphere. I have also sought to throw new light on Pitt's work for the strengthening and extension of the Empire, and on his efforts during the war, which of late have been misrepresented.

It should, however, be understood that this little volume supplements, but in no way supersedes, my larger *Life of Pitt*, which contains the detailed proofs and the references to authorities essential to a com-

plete presentation of the subject. When, therefore, in this volume I seem to dogmatise on little or no evidence, it should be remembered that the proofs and footnotes are to be found in the larger work. I am indebted to many articles in recent Reviews, especially Mr P. E. Roberts' "Warren Hastings and his Accusers" in the *Journal of Indian History* (Allahabad) for March 1924. My heartfelt thanks are due to my friend, Dr H. W. V. Temperley, Fellow of Peterhouse, for valuable suggestions after this work was typed.

J. Holland Rose.

Cambridge,
March 1925.

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	The Call	1
II.	Apprenticeship	10
III.	Reconstruction	29
IV.	Foreign Affairs (1785–1791)	49
V.	Pitt and the British Empire	68
VI.	Home Affairs (1788–1792)	87
VII.	The Rupture with France	104
VIII.	Pitt and the War (1793–1795)	114
IX.	Efforts for Peace (1795–1797)	130
X.	The National Rally (1798–1800)	147
XI.	The Union	163
XII.	Retirement	182
XIII.	William III Redivivus	202
	Index	217

PORTRAITS

William Pitt, from an engraving by H. S. Good, after William Owen (principal portrait painter to the Prince Regent) . . . *Frontispiece*

William Pitt, from an engraving by C. Turner, A.R.A., after Lawrence . . *Facing page* 152

A SHORT LIFE OF WILLIAM PITT

CHAPTER I

THE CALL

To few men, and to no Englishman, has it fallen to enter upon life at a time radiant with promise, yet soon overclouded by disaster, then to restore the credit and the glory of his country, but finally to see her once more overwhelmed by calamities and end his days in almost unrelieved gloom. Such, in bald outlines, is the life story of William Pitt, the Younger. It lends itself to the scoffs of the cynic, the cavils of the political pedant, and the panegyrics of the patriot. My task is to try and unravel the problem of his career by setting forth briefly the interactions between the man and his age.

In few respects was Pitt exceptional. The fourth child and second son of the Earl of Chatham, he inherited from him exceptional forensic gifts, including a marvellous control of language; but he rarely displayed the magnetic power over men and the grip of situations which made the father equally great as statesman, War Minister, and negotiator. In the son

—still more in the other children—was a full measure of the Grenville starchiness, which unhappily dulled the Pitt fire and brilliance. The mother (a Grenville and younger sister of the first Earl Temple) tempered social charm with physical and mental firmness and an equable judgment, which ensured her peace in the home and an honoured old age. Alike in features and disposition, Pitt resembled her rather than Chatham, who dowered him with scintillations of genius and a persistent tendency to gout. The other children, Hester, John, Harriet, and James, were by no means remarkable. John (the future "hero of Walcheren") possessed fine animal spirits, which marked him out for the army. His proper sphere proved to be the Council Chamber. There he excelled in the faculty of clear summing up, destined too often to be marred by a halting execution, which earned him the nickname of the *late* Lord Chatham. As in the case of the Bonaparte family, its powers were concentrated in the second son. Those future rivals, Napoleon and Pitt, owed much to the mother, less to the father, and nothing to brothers and sisters.

To be born, almost in the purple, in 1759—that year of triumphs, Madras, Guadaloupe, Minden, Lagos, Quebec, Quiberon—was in itself a call to greatness; and the father's pride soon centred in William, "the hope and comfort of my life." But all the care of the mother was needed to bring the delicate child through a succession of illnesses. First at Hayes in Kent, then at Burton Pynsent in Somerset, his

childhood meandered doubtfully through the stately parterres which nurtured family and national pride. The father's influence egged him on. Detesting the deadening brutalities of the public schools, Chatham reared his sons at home, and carefully supervised the efforts of the tutor, Rev. Edward Wilson, of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge. In spite of many intervals of illness (often spent at Lyme Regis), William's progress was rapid. Chatham's diction supplied an unceasing lesson in elocution, so we may judge from one of the favourite paternal precepts—"Clothe your ideas in pertinent and well-chosen words deliberately pronounced." Further, his early recommendation to William to study *The Letters of Junius* pointed the way to Westminster. Does it favour the suggestion that the Earl was their author?

The boy therefore narrowly escaped being a prodigy of priggishness. At seven years he indited to his father a Latin epistle. At twelve, with the help of Harriet, he strung together quite passable Addisonian couplets on "the Genius of Poetry." In the next year they, or probably he alone, produced a political play, which, curiously enough, turns on an unscrupulous plot for the overturn of the Queen Regent. The moral at the end seems like a boyish echo of Chatham's protests against any attempt at coercion of the American colonists, and it foreshadowed the part finally played by Pitt himself as the reconciler between King and people. Whiggishly enough, Macaulay pronounced the play "bad"; but an unbiassed perusal leaves one

in doubt whether a better play could be produced at the age of thirteen even by Macaulay's schoolboy. As regards the acting (for all the children acted in it at Burton Pynsent), it appears that William played the part of the faithful Minister pompously and stiffly. The tradition is wholly credible. What boy of thirteen could act the part of a statesman otherwise? Besides, life in Lord Chatham's household ever resembled a state progress.

In October 1773 William began his residence at Pembroke Hall, Cambridge. As Chatham was an Oxford man, and lived in Somerset, the choice of Cambridge for his delicate second son seems singular. Perhaps it resulted from the need of supervision by Wilson during the first few terms; or it may be that Chatham preferred the Whiggism of Cambridge to the high Toryism of Oxford; or perhaps the reputation then enjoyed by Cambridge for tuition and discipline was the determining factor. With the contempt felt by Gibbon for his tutor at Magdalen College, Oxford, who smilingly accepted any plea for absence from class, we may contrast Pitt's life-long friendship with his tutor at Pembroke, the Rev. Dr Pretyman, a Senior Wrangler and a Fellow of the Royal Society. The friendship began with feelings of mutual esteem and admiration. Pretyman (afterwards Tomline, Bishop of Lincoln) has recorded his astonishment at the ease with which the boy translated at sight difficult passages from the Greek and Latin authors. He thus endorsed the estimate of Wilson before Pitt's entry at Cam-

bridge, that he was already qualified to be a Wrangler, and would excel in Classics, History, and Poetry.

The oft-quoted story that Pitt was accompanied to Cambridge by his nurse is without foundation. Wilson went with him and soon had the misfortune to see his charge fall seriously ill. In due course he escorted him back to Burton Pynsent, and they did not return until July 1774. Thereafter, under Wilson's watchful care, the boy gradually improved in health, in spite of the Bacchic cure then insisted on by medical science. His eagerness to learn had often to be checked, in accordance with Chatham's forecast that, if he would but take things quietly, he would in due course make noise enough in the world. The fond prophecy reminds us of that of Bonaparte *père*, about the same time, that the young Napoleon would beat down the kings of Europe.

As Chatham destined William for a political career, he requested the authorities at Pembroke to lay stress on the study of Thucydides and Polybius, and, later, on the Greek and Roman orators. I have found in Pitt's papers notes on the orations, which refer, not to niceties of language, but to the handling of the argument, a proof that he was intent on parliamentary rather than academic honours. At Cambridge also he carefully studied the Bible, Shakespeare, and Milton, thereby gaining that easy mastery of majestic English which seems miraculous to a generation reared on slang.

Ambition, ill-health, natural shyness, perhaps also

the conscientiousness of his tutors, deprived him, at least in his first sessions, of the social relaxations which might have rubbed off angles and dowered him with undergraduate freshness. His letters written at Cambridge contain few topics of interest. They show that he was a trifle homesick, and did not enter much into University life. Yet he was no bookworm. He regularly took horse exercise (then almost the only form of athletics practised by the wealthier students) and had lessons in fencing. As for his friendships, he associated with Lords Granby, Westmorland, Spencer, Euston, Lonsdale, and Camden, as also with Pepper Arden, Eliot, and Bankes—a group characterised by solid excellence rather than brilliance. Not until near the end of his residence did he make the acquaintance of William Wilberforce of St John's College, already remarkable for a silvery flow of words, set off with wit, mimicry, and song. Soon they were mutually attracted and formed a friendship which neither time nor political differences could sever. The sunny geniality of Wilberforce helped to melt Pitt's home-bred stiffness; and he recorded later, that Pitt's "great natural shyness and even awkwardness often produced effects for which pride was falsely charged on him." No passage ever penned throws more light on Pitt's character.

Pitt, then, like the young Milton long before him, moved as a being somewhat apart from undergraduates. Whether it were his natural reserve, the fond forcing at Hayes and Burton Pynsent, or the dawning sense

of his future mission, he rarely unbent. Now, a youth who studies hard and does not mix freely with his fellows is apt as a man to form too lofty an estimate of human nature and expect too readily the triumph of his ideals. The shortcomings of Pitt the statesman are traceable largely to his lop-sided upbringing.

Ill-health at the end of 1776 compelled Pitt to resort to the privilege then accorded to the sons of nobles, of taking a degree without sitting for an examination. The increasing gravity of the news from North America now deepened his interest in politics. His father had long and vehemently protested against the measures of Lord North's Government, which had alienated the colonists and led to the Declaration of Independence. Whenever possible, Pitt had gone to Westminster to hear the debates on this absorbing topic; and now his visits became more frequent. Converse with his father during the vacations must have sharpened his hatred for the policy of armed coercion.

The year 1776 is remarkable, not only for the American Declaration of Independence, but also for the publication of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, which dealt a shrewd blow to that parent of colonial discords, the Mercantilist System. These two events, coinciding with Pitt's attainment of freedom from the trammels of examinations, must have determined finally his resolve to take up the burden which his father would soon lay down. On 30th May 1777 he helped the Earl to crawl to the House of Lords, and heard the burning words with which the veteran, lean-

ing on a crutch, pleaded with Ministers to rescind all the oppressive Acts passed since 1762. Nothing was done, and the result was—Saratoga. Pitt's enthusiastic comments on the speech, written amidst "the placid uniformity of a Cambridge life," prove that the published reports do but slander the original. We shall never know it in its full force and majesty. But all was wasted on the House of Lords. Accordingly he returned to his study of Civil Law, the Law of Nations, and "the politics of two thousand years ago." From this steady preparation for his life's work he now admitted more social relaxations; and Pretyman, his biographer, dwells fondly on his gaiety and sprightliness, abounding in wit and quick repartee, though never barbed with malice. Unfortunately that primly nervous tutor cites no examples.

About this time we catch fleeting references in Pitt's letters to his keeping terms at Lincoln's Inn, another avenue of approach to Westminster. Pitt seems not to have heard Chatham's great speeches of 20th November and 5th December, spoken under the shadow of the military disaster. But he and his brother-in-law, Lord Mahon, supported the tottering steps of the Earl to the House on that memorable day, 7th April 1778, when, after making his final impassioned protest against any surrender to the House of Bourbon, the orator suddenly pressed his hand to his heart and fell. William and the youngest brother hurried up, and helped the dismayed group of peers which bore him out. For a time at Hayes the states-

man rallied, but on 11th May he passed away. At the funeral at Westminster Abbey, banned by the Court, William was chief mourner. The duty of taking up the service of England now became more than ever a sacred trust bequeathed by the mighty dead.

CHAPTER II

APPRENTICESHIP

The death of Chatham occurred at a time of deep humiliation. Already the contest with the young United States was draining away the national resources, while a wretchedly mismanaged Navy left the coasts open to the insults of Paul Jones and other daring raiders. France also was about to throw her whole weight into the scale; behind France was Spain; and behind the Bourbon Courts were the Maritime Powers, preparing to resist the right of search and other naval customs deemed necessary to our national security. From Madrid to Stockholm the Chanceries resolved to humble the Power which the genius of Chatham had raised to heights so splendid and yet so precarious.

While England excited the envy of other nations, she was rent by schisms at home. No small part of her people believed the war with the American colonists to be unjust, and, if crowned with success, to be likely to undermine our domestic liberties. "My sole hope is peace. Victory would rivet our chains," wrote Horace Walpole in October 1779. For George was bent on establishing personal rule

through the medium of subservient Ministers and a corrupted Parliament; and his military triumph in America would herald the triumph of autocracy at home. So strongly did Chatham share this conviction that he withdrew from military service his eldest son, John, then serving as aide-de-camp to General Carleton in North America.

William warmly espoused his father's views and now sought, by ending this fratricidal war, to throttle its debased counterpart, the system of jobbery and corruption at Westminster. It was notorious that advancement in the public services depended, not on merit, but on devotion to the King's cause; and several officers of high rank resigned from disgust at proceedings which diverted large sums from national defence to mere party purposes. Even before the outbreak of strife in North America, the expenditure on the Navy was nearly double as much as it had been during the glorious Seven Years' War. In 1777, when the nation was paying for 51,700 seamen, there were only 47,400; and only 35 sail-of-the-line were at sea or ready for sea. By dint of hard work, France in 1778 claimed to have 80 sail ready, and 67,000 seamen. What wonder that Sir Charles Middleton, Comptroller of the Navy, wrote sternly to the First Lord, the Earl of Sandwich, that unless naval administration was set right, the kingdom would be lost? What wonder that Chatham prophesied that, while England was fighting *herself* across the seas, the French would soon land on her coasts? After Spain declared war, in

June 1779, the national danger increased. Indeed, nothing but singular mismanagement on the part of the great Franco-Spanish fleet prevented a landing in the South-West.

Nevertheless, as the national danger increased, so too did the national spirit. Britons began to close their ranks against their hereditary enemies; and Chatham, shortly before his death, heartily approved of his son John re-entering the army. In June 1779 General Eliott began his glorious defence of Gibraltar, and early in 1780 its first relief was smartly effected by Rodney. But the chief asset to "the King's Friends" was the mad excesses of the London mob during the Lord George Gordon riots (June 1780). Beginning with an outburst of religious bigotry, they ended in an orgy of arson, plunder, and drunkenness. The King compelled Ministers and magistrates to do their duty and restore order; and in the revulsion of feeling due to his courage and their cowardice he dissolved Parliament, and, thanks largely to clever electioneering, secured for his system two more years of disastrous existence.

Such were the conditions under which Pitt entered public life. At first, in 1778–80, he divided his time between Cambridge and Lincoln's Inn, thus bringing a wider outlook to bear on the then dry and formal studies of law. Probably also to this time we may refer his fruitful study of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. But the Lincoln's Inn period yields only one episode worthy of note. During the Lord George

Gordon riots the entertainment of the officers defending those precincts brought him into contact with Gibbon. After dinner the sage was pompously dealing out wit and wisdom, when the youth ventured to question a certain dictum. At once the heavy artillery was turned upon him, but he replied so deftly as to silence the oracle and reduce him to a peevish exit.

Pitt's practice on the western circuit was interrupted by the news of the dissolution of Parliament. For some months he had been preparing his candidature for the University of Cambridge; but whatever chance he might have had in normal times was ended by the Royalist reaction of September 1780, and two "King's Friends" kept their seats. But when one of his University comrades mentioned his desires to Sir James Lowther, that magnate of the dales secured his unopposed return for one of his boroughs, Appleby; and he took his seat at St Stephen's on 23rd January 1781. At a later date he represented his University; but perhaps the fact of his easy admission to Parliament through one of the "pocket boroughs" partly explains his future forbearance towards that "excrescence of the Constitution." Yet his general interest in Reform was scarcely surpassed by his championship of the cause of peace. This was natural; for all enlightened observers ascribed the appalling weakness of the nation to its political corruption, and that in its turn to the debasement of the House of Commons.

It was a long story of gradual decay. The repre-

sentation of England had scarcely changed since the time of the Tudors. With very few exceptions the new industrial centres of the North were without the pale, and scores of small towns and declining villages in the Midlands and South formed the political citadel of George III. Scotland returned 45 members, Cornwall 44, and Lancashire 14. On the whole, the counties were far better represented than the towns. About 16,000 Yorkshiremen could vote for the two county members; but 50 men of Thirsk equalled the 16,000 in political power—no one could say why. This anomaly was outdone in the South and East, where two members apiece were elected by 37 privileged persons at Bury St Edmunds, by 25 at Tiverton, by 14 at Dunwich, by 1 at Bossiney (Cornwall), and by 7 non-residents at the deserted mound of Old Sarum. On the whole, 257 members (a majority of the House) were returned by 11,075 voters; and most of the pocket boroughs could be bought for £5000 or £6000 apiece.

Here was the crux of the problem. Wealthy magnates and "nabobs" swollen with Indian spoils could virtually buy up the House of Commons. The system lent itself admirably to George III's design of controlling Parliament through a cohort of ever-expectant placemen. To cut at the root of this upas-tree was the alpha and omega of political wisdom; and the Rev. Christopher Wyvil benefited his country when he stirred up Yorkshire to protest, and organised other county associations to take up the work of

"Economical Reform." This programme was at least safe and practical. Besides effecting a saving of fully £200,000 a year, it would sweep away the political sinecures of which the King and North made so unscrupulous a use. Further than this most reformers would not go. Chatham, followed herein even by "Junius," had advised leaving the rotten boroughs alone, lest the whole fabric of the constitution be unsteadied. Burke fathered "Economical Reform," but he screamed with rage when sacrilegious hands were put forth to steady the ark of the constitution.

The new movement fared badly in that Parliament. Fresh from the sight of the London mob tipsily shouting "No Popery," members shrank from putting power in the hands of the many and preferred to strengthen those of the King. Further, the Opposition was rent by schisms, which, for all their pettiness, prevented effective union. First of the groups in importance was that of the Rockingham Whigs, consisting mainly of the governing families and their adherents, who bitterly resented the new autocracy. They were poorly led; for the Marquis of Rockingham lacked the forcefulness and energy needed for party scuffles. By one of his actions he rendered doubtful service to politics and a positive disservice to literature; for he it was who furthered the parliamentary ambitions of Edmund Burke.

By sheer intellectual superiority this "Irish adventurer" soon became the mentor of the Rockingham

Whigs. But while he sometimes guided them, he was never of them. That beefy group yawned at his Celtic exuberance and dozed under his philosophic homilies. In fact, Nature designed Burke primarily for the study, secondly for the Bar, and emphatically not for Parliament. His writings exhale political wisdom; his conduct at Westminster often belied it. His pen illumined every subject; his speeches not seldom obfuscated or distorted it. Moreover, his elevation of thought, richness of invention, and feminine sensitiveness consorted ill with the rough and tumble of public life, which jarred his nerves and fretted his temper, until the serene thinker almost disappeared behind the screaming scold. Thus he became the literary-political Jekyll and Hyde of that age. The pitiful contrast lives on in Goldsmith's couplets :—

"Who, born for the universe, narrowed his mind,
And to party gave up what was meant for mankind,
Though fraught with all learning, yet straining his throat
To persuade Tommy Townsend to lend him a vote."

The more progressive section of the Whigs was championed by the most "clubbable" man of that age, Charles James Fox. Born in 1749, he was educated at Eton and Hertford College, Oxford. His father, Lord Holland, left him to grow up in habits so dissolute as, later on, by contrast with Chatham's model son, to point the moral to Hogarth's cartoons of the industrious and idle apprentices. But all-night sittings at Almack's gaming house did not wholly dull

the edge of his debating rapier. He excelled alike in vigorous though sometimes diffuse statements, in lively assaults and in telling rejoinders. Above all, he judged well the temper of his audience. As Burke said, "Fox always hits the House between wind and water." His influence was somewhat impaired by his early change from hot Toryism to savage opposition; and recklessness both in word and action marred his fortunes at many crises, especially when he came into collision with the best parliamentary tactician of the age. At present the generous qualities of the man excused the gyrations of the politician. His full orb shone with a radiance that eclipsed all but the rising star.

Pitt, of course, joined the third group, termed Chathamites. If not Whigs they were Whiggish. It is invariably the lot of new super-party formations to become one more party; and Chatham's efforts to unite all patriots in a solid phalanx merely cut across the existing parties. Nay! his followers abstracted from the Whig Opposition the pith and marrow which might successfully have opposed the King and his "Friends." Resentment at this schism long told against the Chathamites; and their present leader, the Earl of Shelburne, though admired for his learning and talent, was generally credited with a subtleness amounting to duplicity. The group still stood for non-party government, though it was clear that only a strong and united Opposition could defeat George III and save the country. To this nondescript wavering

group, Pitt came as an invaluable recruit ; for he alone could give it both a personality and a programme.

He delivered his maiden speech on 26th February 1781, about five weeks after he took his seat. The occasion was Burke's second endeavour to pass his Economy Bill for the abolition of the sinecures referred to above. A year before, the first Bill had been whittled down in committee, and there was less chance of success in the new Parliament. Yet the vigour, grace, and almost uncanny maturity of Pitt's oratory made a powerful impression. Burke forthwith dubbed him, not a chip of the old block, but the old block itself. Lord North generously declared the speech to be the best first speech he ever heard ; and another opponent, the chronicler Wraxall, saw in it good judgment, chaste diction, and solemnity rather than brilliance. Fox, a better judge, was far more enthusiastic, and declared that Chatham had appeared again with all his virtues and all his talents. The best debating points were the attack on Ministers for not themselves proposing reforms which would once more enthrone the King in the hearts of his people, and the assertion that economy was of vital importance ; for " in a time of necessity and common exertion solid grandeur is dependent on the reduction of expense." The speech was remarkable even more for ripeness of judgment than for perfection of form. Under twenty-two years of age, he spoke with the balance, tact, and self-restraint of a man of fifty.

His second speech, on the subject of vesting financial

control more fully in the House of Commons, was equally able and equally futile. North and the "King's Friends" wobbled helplessly on their benches but carried the day in the lobbies. Not until the arrival of news of Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown did North's defence weaken. Early in 1782 it went down before the attacks of Fox, Burke, and Pitt. On 8th March the youth astonished the House by declaring that, in the unlikely case of his being invited to join a new Administration, he would accept no subordinate post. Clearly, if Pitt was Chatham *redivivus*, he had full store of his pride.

The boast was no idle boast. At once Pitt took a high place, not only in Parliament and at the Bar, but also in the club and the *salon*. At that fashionable resort, Goostree's Club, Wilberforce declared him to be the most amusing and resourceful, even in a party of wits. The Marquis Wellesley also described his wit as "quick and ready, but it was rather lively than sharp. He was endowed . . . with a gay heart and social spirit. With these qualities he was the life and soul of his own society. His appearance dispelled all care." Geniality in private accounts for much; and it appears that he carried it so far as for a time to gamble at Goostree's, but perceiving the dangers of that fashionable vice, he abandoned it for ever. With the nation clamouring for an able, level-headed, and patriotic leader, he had the game in his hands.

The crisis developed fast. On 20th March North insisted in handing in the resignation which he had

far too long delayed. The King, astute even in his distress, negotiated with Rockingham through his rival, Shelburne. Finally Rockingham consented to become First Lord of the Treasury, with Shelburne as Secretary for Home, Irish, and Colonial Affairs. Lord John Cavendish took the Exchequer and Fox the Foreign Office. That masterful " King's Friend," Lord Thurlow, was retained as Lord Chancellor. Shelburne sought to include Pitt in this composite Administration, but in a subordinate office which he at once refused. Thus it was as a private member that he supported Burke's new and emasculated measure of " Economical Reform," and thereafter proposed a motion for " a moderate and substantial Reform " of Parliament. According to Romilly, his speech of 7th May 1782 on this topic contained the daring statement that the House of Commons did not represent the people of Great Britain : " it represented nominal boroughs, ruined and exterminated towns, noble families, wealthy individuals, and foreign potentates " (the last a reference to the influence of the Nabob of Arcot). Probably his vehemence frightened the House ; for, despite able support by Fox and Sheridan, this, his first motion, was defeated, though only by 161 votes to 141. Ten days later he spoke in favour of a motion for shortening the duration of Parliaments, contending that the Septennial Act had tended to weaken the hold of the electorate over Ministers and members alike. At midsummer he supported a Bill for putting down bribery at elections. Strange to

say, Fox opposed it—the first occasion on which they openly disagreed. The Bill was lost. In his first phase, then, Pitt was a firm reformer.

But now came a series of events which threw awry both men and measures. On 1st July 1782 Rockingham died. George III at once offered the Premiership to Shelburne. Several of the followers of the Marquis demurred to this choice, and Fox and Lord John Cavendish resigned. Thereupon Shelburne offered the Chancellorship of the Exchequer to Pitt, who accepted it. Burke and Sheridan also resigned and sharply arraigned Shelburne and the new Ministers for taking office. Fox hotly declared that in a very short time they would be joined by Lord North's following ; but his attack on Pitt for going over to the King's side was weakened by the fact that those firm Reformers, the Duke of Richmond and Admiral Keppel, retained office under Shelburne. Further, the Earl had lately induced George III to recognise the independence of the United States, a step which would bring about peace in North America and strengthen our hands against France and Spain. Rodney's great victory off Guadaloupe on 12th April, and the brilliant relief of Gibraltar by Howe, gave us a chance to conclude peace with those Powers on favourable terms ; but the chance might be only temporary. Therefore those negotiations were even more urgent than constitutional questions ; and at a national crisis, when death necessitates the reconstruction of the Cabinet, surely the true patriot is he

who enables the Government to be carried on, provided that his action involves no sacrifice of principle. Pitt declared his trust in Shelburne; Fox, it appears, had good reasons for not trusting him. Such was the determining cause in the unfortunate breach between the two young champions of Reform.

Thanks to the accession of the Shelburne Cabinet, the negotiations, first with the United States, then with our European enemies, were carried through satisfactorily. By 20th January 1783 preliminaries of peace with the Bourbon Powers were signed; and the worst crisis in British foreign relations was virtually over. Naturally enough, the Opposition made capital out of the great cessions of territory, some of which led to the resignation of Richmond and Keppel. During that winter the strain in the Commons was very severe, and on 11th February Pitt, with Shelburne's approval, saw Fox in order to arrange a plan of co-operation. Fox thereupon suggested the retirement of Shelburne and the inclusion of Pitt in a Reform Ministry. At once the youth tossed back his head, with the defiant retort, "I did not come here to betray Lord Shelburne."

The phrase and the gesture mark a definite breach, and, curiously enough, it occurred about a man whom nobody liked and most mistrusted—opinions which Pitt soon came to share. For the present, however, he held firmly to this political enigma and thus estranged that transparent soul, Fox. Three days later Lord North repelled similar overtures from

Pitt's friend, Dundas—an event which foreshadowed the coalition of Fox and North and the fall of Shelburne.

In a tripartite grouping of parties two sets which are in Opposition always tend to coalesce, but never has there been a stranger alliance than that of the two men who for a decade had hurled at each other scorn and abuse. It was as if Strafford and Cromwell had joined hands to enforce their will upon Charles I. In the present case the two opposites coalesced for the ostensible purpose of censuring the terms of peace—as though our triumphant enemies would heed the protest of an artificial majority in a now discredited House. Fox, of course, succeeded in proving the Peace of Versailles to be a bad peace. After him Pitt rose, and, in spite of a fit of sickness, fired off a thrilling retort. From detail to detail, he tracked his rival and showed the impossibility of gaining better conditions. Then, turning fiercely upon North, as the author of these disasters, he thus referred to his union with Fox, "I know a just and lawful impediment, and in the name of the public safety, I here forbid the banns." For himself, rather than descend to so mean a device, he would quit public life and seek honourable poverty. Reasoning and patriotic indignation were thrown away upon that expectant rout. By 207 votes to 190 the new Coalition carried the day, and the Shelburne Ministry resigned.

During thirty-seven days Great Britain drifted rudderless. George made desperate efforts to find

a pilot other than Fox. Following a hint from Shelburne, he sent for Pitt, who was too wary to accept; then actually for North, who was staunch to Fox; then he bargained with the Coalition, which would not bargain; then again he approached Pitt, who was obdurate. Finally, after threatening to retire to Hanover, he accepted the hated Coalition. Nominally the new Cabinet was headed by the unimpressive Duke of Portland. Fox and North became Secretaries of State, and Cavendish, Keppel, and Burke resumed their former offices. Thurlow did not return to the woolsack. But, even without the help of his intrigues, George might well hope to dissolve this patched-up union. It is needless to say that the Coalition Government failed materially to better the terms of peace, lately the object of their scorn; and they were ratified at Versailles on 3rd September. As for Reform, it fared no better than before. When Pitt brought forward proposals of that nature, Fox gave a half-hearted support, but the Northites threw them out.

From these disappointments Pitt sought relief in an autumnal tour in North France. His objects were relaxation, information as to the condition of that country, and practice in the French language. In company with his brother-in-law, Eliot, and Wilberforce, he journeyed slowly from Calais to St Omer (where Nelson stayed a month later), and so on to Rheims. There they made the acquaintance of a genial Abbé, de Lageard, who, on one occasion, questioned them as to the strange influence of so

immoral a man as Fox on so moral a people as the English. Pitt's reply is characteristic: "Ah! you have not been under the wand of the magician." At Fontainebleau they saw the King and Queen, and had to endure many questions from courtiers as to Parliamentary Reform. It is known that the Prime Minister Necker and his wife desired to marry their daughter, the future Mme de Staël, to Pitt; but apparently she refused to let the matter proceed further. It is doubtful whether Pitt ever heard of it.

Fresh from these distractions and dangers Pitt returned to London on 24th October. Three weeks later Fox introduced his famous India Bills. Whether or no they were due chiefly to his enthusiasm or to Burke's studies in Indian affairs, they aroused a storm of controversy; for Fox proposed, *inter alia*, to curb the powers of the East India Company and subject it to a Commission, consisting of seven members, appointed in the first instance by Parliament, and armed with plenary powers. The Company protested vigorously against this injustice; and its "proprietors" made frantic efforts to secure the rejection of the Bills. Representing them as an attack on chartered rights, they gained over the moneyed interests generally. But while these protested vehemently against the measure, it secured large majorities within the House. This was seen on 27th November. Pitt then inveighed against the haste with which this far-reaching change was pressed on; and he answered Fox's plea of necessity with the

epigram: "Necessity is the argument of tyrants: it is the creed of slaves." But his motion of adjournment was lost by 229 votes to 120.

By opposing Fox's measure (in most respects admirable) he laid himself open to the charge of partisanship; but in that corrupt age any Bill conferring powers of patronage was judged primarily according to the potency of the corrupting agencies that it vested in Ministers. Now, the powers of patronage latent in the proposed India Commission were enormous. Already the countryside teemed with "nabobs" swollen by the spoils of Bengal; and the excited imagination of George and of all true Tories saw in Fox's proposals a deep plot to pack the Commission with Coalitionists, the best posts in India with their nominees, and the pocket boroughs of England with the finished products. From these triple toils of corruption who could escape? Lively fancies like these were further excited by a clever caricature by Sayer, depicting Fox as Carlo Khan of Bengal, riding on an elephant with the features of North, and led into Leadenhall Street by Burke.

That cartoon sealed the doom of the Fox-North Coalition. The head electioneering agents now sent in reports to that effect, and even suggested that "everything stands prepared for the blow if a certain person has courage to strike it." The King resolved to strike—through the House of Lords. Some of the governmental peers were wavering. He therefore empowered Pitt's cousin, the second Earl Temple, to

warn all whom it might concern that any who voted for the Bill would be counted his personal enemies. This unconstitutional device succeeded. The Lords threw out the measure, whereupon, on 18th December, George turned out the Ministry and sent for Pitt, who forthwith became First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer.

As is usual in the politics of that age, the story has a sordid side. We now know that Pitt's refusal to take office in the spring was due to his conviction of the impossibility of carrying on an Administration, and that his acceptance of office at Christmastide was based on carefully prepared electioneering estimates that he would have a majority in the new House, as a result of the growing exasperation against Fox's Bills. Those estimates proved to be correct. Thus, in the light of recent investigations Pitt's action appears by no means Quixotic but remarkably far-seeing. He took office in the teeth of a hostile majority of the House of Commons because competent judges were convinced that that House no longer represented the majority of the voters.

The charge that ambition entered into his motives is tenable. But it may fairly be contended that, in shouldering the burden of office when the Coalition had brought matters to an *impasse*, he was fulfilling an urgent public duty. The Government had to be carried on, and how could it be by that slippery union of opposites, the Foxites and Northites? England, in her time of disaster and virtual bankruptcy, needed

a firm and honest Administration; and, after the political suicide of Fox, Pitt alone could form one. The price of three per cent. Consols during the years 1783–85 is the best sign that the Coalition inspired no confidence and that Pitt did. Those stocks stood at 68½ in February 1783 when the Coalition seized on power. In spite of the conclusion of peace on 3rd September, prices continued sharply to fall, from 64⅞ in that month to 58½ in December. After the completion of Pitt's Cabinet they rose to 60¾. Thereafter they declined somewhat, but in 1785 showed a phenomenal rise as the result of his financial reforms, soon to be noticed.

As to the charge that Pitt now deserted the people's cause for that of the King, the ensuing narrative will supply a sufficient answer. But we may hazard the conjecture that George III, after the severe lesson he had lately received, was not likely to recur to "Asiatic" methods of rule. England, too, had had her lesson as to tricky Coalitions and cried out for a return to straightforward methods. At the crisis of December 1783 Pitt neither deserted the people nor went over to the King: he reconciled them.

CHAPTER III

RECONSTRUCTION

A MAN of twenty-four and a half years who accepts the Premiership in the teeth of a bitterly hostile majority perpetrates a political solecism which can be justified only by success. Pitt, as we have seen, had good grounds for believing that that majority no longer represented the voters, and proofs soon accumulated to that effect. Nevertheless, until matters were ripe for a dissolution, his position was appallingly difficult. He must appeal from Parliament to the nation, yet he could not long defy that Parliament. An India Bill was an urgent necessity; yet how could he increase control by the Crown without mortally offending the Company? He was pledged to Parliamentary Reform; yet at present Reform was impossible. Above all, he must show a firm front to the hostile world with a discredited Army, a half-rotten Navy, and a nearly bankrupt Treasury. And who would help him in these Herculean labours?

At the outset a heavy blow fell upon him. That vain, pompous, but influential magnate, Earl Temple, who had been appointed Secretary of State, suddenly resigned owing to personal pique and shut himself up

amidst the formal splendours of Stowe. The news cost Pitt a sleepless night (almost the only occasion in his life). At that Christmastide anxieties crowded upon him. While refusing to weight his Cabinet with that doubtful and unpopular personage, the Earl of Shelburne, he had to call to the woolsack, Thurlow, who combined duplicity with arrogance and bad temper. The Duke of Grafton, Lord Sackville, possibly also Lord Cornwallis, refused his invitations outright; and his Cabinet therefore comprised mediocrities like the Marquis of Carmarthen and Lord Sydney as Foreign and Home Secretaries, Earl Gower President of the Council, and the Duke of Rutland Lord Privy Seal. Lord Howe, First Lord of the Admiralty, was the only thoroughly good appointment, and in the fiercest debates he was all but dumb. Below Cabinet rank stood the Duke of Richmond at the Ordnance, William Grenville and Lord Mulgrave Joint Paymasters of the Forces, and Henry Dundas Treasurer of the Navy. The last, though jovial and clever, had a name for shiftiness, but this defect was outweighed by his having close at heel practically all the Scottish members.

If everything had depended on the House of Commons, Pitt's failure was assured; but as the majority in that House was the outcome of an alliance which stank in the nostrils of the people, he framed his policy so as to appeal to the electorate. First, on 12th January 1784, he repelled the taunts of the jubilant Opposition by declaring that he would never

be responsible for measures in which he did not cordially acquiesce, or be the instrument of secret influence. In other words, he would not stoop to the level of North, or use the methods of Temple.

Having thus vindicated his independence, "the schoolboy" next brought in his India Bill. Here he had the advantage of knowing what concessions the Company would voluntarily make; for in four resolutions that body had lately defined them; and, on the whole, it was ready to accept a mild flagellation from Pitt for fear of enduring the scorpions of Fox. Pitt's proposals will, however, be more conveniently considered in Chapter V, dealing with his influence on the Empire. Here we may note that the Foxites and Northites, intent on seizing the India patronage, rejected his Bill by 222 votes to 214.

To the loud shouts of "Resign" Pitt turned a deaf ear. He knew that the City of London and mercantile circles were with him on this question, and he resolved to bide his time until he could consult the country to full advantage. Again and again Fox and North carried motions of censure. Successive endeavours to bring about a private understanding with the Portland Whigs and Fox failed. The Whig leader threatened impeachment and taunted him with clinging to office "with a sullen obstinacy peculiar to himself." Pitt replied that Fox was but the champion of the majority of that House against the voice of the people; and he pointed to the fact that important addresses of confidence were coming in, even from

unexpected quarters ; also that Fox was howled down at a meeting of his own constituents at Westminster.

So the strife of tongues went on at St Stephen's, while the mind of the nation turned more and more from the unnatural Coalition to the young Minister. Admiration of his courage helped on the change. The talk about his unconstitutional conduct in not resigning made no impression. Little by little the subtle alchemy of public opinion permeated the House. The diatribes of Fox rang hollow, and his majorities dwindled from a score in February to *one* on 8th March. Accordingly Fox and North did not press home their threat of stopping supplies, probably because some of their supporters warned them against that step. Finally, on 24th March, the omens being favourable, the King dissolved Parliament.

During forty days the country heaved with the excitement of the most keenly fought election of that age. The issues were strangely confused ; for the Coalition had cut across party lines. The official Whigs and Tories gave out that they were holding together to fetter the action of George and oust a youthful upstart who was the last hope of autocracy. The people saw it far otherwise. In their view the Fox-North majority had bartered principle for place and pelf ; George figured as its captive and Pitt as the heaven-sent deliverer. Caring nought for the constitutional questions at stake, they sought to replace the Coalition by an Administration that was intelligible and straightforward. Pitt's position was

intelligible and his record was straightforward. Therefore Tories voted for him as the rescuer of George from duress; and very many Whigs supported him as a better friend to Reform than Fox. The Yorkshire Reform Association, the parent of all such bodies, abjured Fox and supported the two Pittite candidates, Wilberforce and Duncombe. But these owed their success largely to the cottage "manufacturers," who were nearly all Tories. The Coalitionists of Yorkshire were therefore discomfited despite the efforts of the Whig magnates, the Cavendishes, Fitzwilliams, and Lords Carlisle and Surrey, to keep their county in the well-worn ruts. The example there set was widely followed. Thorough-going Whigs and thorough-going Tories alike rejected the stultifying alliance; and both Burke and Horace Walpole admitted that the private influence and gold of the magnates of the Coalition generally failed to stop the revolt. Finally, "Fox's martyrs" numbered about 160.

Thanks to his magnetic influence, Fox won a Pyrrhic victory at Westminster. Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, and her equally beautiful sister, tripped through the slums to win back wanderers from the fold, and the Prince of Wales from Carlton House put forth eager efforts on behalf of the King's enemy. George III played his usual discreet part in electioneering, as appears in his letter of 1st May to Pitt:

"The poll for Westminster of this day still continues favourable for Mr Fox; but I have heard that the Quackers (*sic*), though in general unwilling to take part in elections,

have no disinclination on the present state of the poll to come forward if properly applied to, and that their number amounts to near 300, which would place Lord Hood and Sir Cecil Wray in a very decided situation."

At the end Fox stood 460 votes below Admiral Hood, but far above the other Pittite, Sir Cecil Wray. The last therefore demanded a scrutiny. Bribery, of course, there had been ; but from the letter just quoted it seems that the High Bailiff condoned irregularities in order to be able to unseat Fox, and finally he refused to declare him elected. By a side wind, Fox entered the House for the time as member for the Orkneys, and when Pitt, who had been triumphantly returned for Cambridge University, dragged on this election squabble to wearisome length, he was reproached with lacking that generosity which lends lustre even to a brilliant victory. On this question he finally sustained a well-deserved defeat, and Fox took his seat for Westminster.

Efforts have recently been made to explain away Pitt's success at the polls by clever electioneering, backed up by the money and influence of the East India Company. The potency of this influence is indisputable. Yet it must be remembered that Burke's Economical Reform Act had much restricted governmental interference at elections—a fact which told against Pitt's supporters. Further, every diarist of that age bears witness to the widespread enthusiasm on his behalf, and the still more general detestation of the Coalition. It is therefore certain that Pitt

owed his victory to a national impulse. If he had gained the day merely by bribery and corruption, would not a sharp reaction soon have unseated him? Far from that, he strengthened his hold on the country throughout the following years.

On 24th May Pitt faced Parliament with a majority of 168. Yet that majority was not solid. It consisted, not very unevenly, of Reformers and supporters of the royal prerogative—a fact which made his position extremely difficult when the old party questions were to the fore; and, as we shall see, the inconsistencies in Pitt's early career resulted chiefly from the necessity of humouring either convinced Tories or convinced Whigs. At first the questions before Parliament were chiefly non-partisan. They related to India and national finance. In spite of strong opposition from Fox, Burke, and Francis, Pitt carried his India Bill with little modification and by a large majority.

He also had public opinion with him in tackling the pressing problem of finance. Here the outlook was dark. When all the war bills came in (swollen by delay), the National Debt stood at about £245,000,000, while the revenue could with difficulty be forced up to £25,000,000. A loan of £6,000,000 being urgently needed, Pitt initiated the method of throwing open to public competition all tenders, thereby securing better terms and cutting away ministerial perquisites. He also funded £6,600,000 of the large floating or unfunded debt, issuing stocks for that amount at

93, bearing interest at 5 per cent. Better terms could not then be had ; but in the future, as credit improved, the price of issue was raised and the rate of interest lowered.

Equally urgent was the need of stopping the appalling leakage in the revenue. Along the coast all the men and most women either smuggled or connived at smuggling. The higher the duty, the greater the effort to avoid it. Tea, being charged at the average rate of 119 per cent., was the smuggler's staple. With singular boldness Pitt resolved to defeat him by lowering the duty to 12 per cent. on the cheaper kinds, recouping the temporary loss to revenue by increasing the window tax. This last, though deservedly unpopular, was accepted in order to get the benefit of cheap tea by legal means. Pitt sought to stop other frauds on the revenue ; and when Fox factiously opposed these proposals, he was soundly beaten. The revenue soon showed a marked increase.

Into Pitt's complex proposals for a Sinking Fund to lessen the National Debt it is impossible here to enter, but we may add that his Budgets both of 1784 and 1785 were designed to spread out taxation widely on a large number of articles in common use, on which the collection would be inexpensive. His choice was curiously haphazard. For example, his proposal to tax coals raised so great an outcry that he withdrew it ; but he held to other irritating imposts, on shopkeepers, domestic servants, bricks, and candles. On the other hand, he increased the revenue by curtailing

the lax customs which had grown up in the franking of letters by members of Parliament; and he benefited commerce by abrogating the new tax on raw cotton, which had proved disastrous to Lancashire. In this connection he laid down the guiding principle that "manufactures in general ought to be free from taxes, lest otherwise they should be so far depressed as either to endanger their exportation, or diminish their home consumption." For the present his practice fell short of this precept; the student of his Budgets will, however, note with interest that by degrees their crudities lessen or disappear, and that the exigencies of the Revolutionary War bring him at last to the adoption of an Income Tax.

The passage just quoted was one among many that show Pitt's faith in letting industry have free play. Never was the doctrine of *laisser aller* more needed; for manufactures were then undergoing the momentous change from the cottage to the factory. The Industrial Revolution, first gathering momentum from the inventions of Hargreaves and Arkwright, had since 1779 been accelerated by Crompton's contrivance, the "mule," which improved the quality of thread, so that our spinning industry defied all competitors. A little later Cartwright's power-loom rendered possible the mass production of cheap woollens and cottons. By a very fortunate coincidence Watt now adapted his new steam-engine to factory work; and as in these same years the iron industry forged rapidly ahead, Britain, in this time of her sorest financial need,

tapped the sources of illimitable wealth. This concurrence of advantages, unique in the history of mankind, potently assisted her speedy recovery from a disastrous war, and enabled her to withstand a still longer and more exhausting struggle.

The part which a statesman plays in these developments is generally exaggerated. He may hinder them disastrously; he cannot greatly expedite them. At most he can give them free play (a rare boon), trusting to the myriad energies of the race continuously to fructify. This was Pitt's *rôle*. He sought to strike the fetters from industry, and then to further the exchange of its products with our neighbours. In accord with the dictum of Adam Smith, that a commercial nation prospers most "when its neighbours are all rich, industrious, and commercial nations," he sought, first, to bring about the commercial union of the British Isles, and thereafter to develop trade with the "hereditary enemy," France.

The fiscal relations between Great Britain and Ireland were at that time tense. The old policy of repressing Ireland, both politically and industrially, had broken down during the American War. Ireland then gained her Parliament—"the Grattan Parliament"—a collection of Episcopal Protestants and of placemen which misrepresented that people in nearly every particular. More representative were the delegates of the Volunteers who often coerced the Dublin Parliament into a semblance of popular action. In spite of recent trade concessions several grievances

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remained. Though now able to trade with British colonies, Ireland could not carry colonial products to Great Britain, or buy them thence. She admitted British goods generally at low duties, or in some cases with none; but her manufactures, except woollen yarn and linens, were taxed. Against this lop-sided arrangement the Irish protested, and in May 1784 the Dublin Parliament petitioned the King for a more liberal system. Pitt's leanings, as we have seen, were in the same direction, and he resolved virtually to establish Free Trade between the two islands. Thenceforth he studied all the facts of the case, and had several interviews with Orde, the Irish Secretary, and Beresford, head of the Revenue Department. In the winter of 1784–5 he wrote to his friend the Duke of Rutland (then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland) that Parliamentary Reform must come, sooner or later, in both countries; meanwhile, he would take up fiscal reform, in the hope of unifying the British Isles; but Ireland, in return for free access to British and colonial markets, must take up her share of imperial burdens, preferably by contributing towards naval expenses.

These principles he embodied in ten Propositions establishing inter-insular Free Trade, and fixing the naval quota on favourable terms. Even so, the Irish Parliament, while accepting the commercial boons just outlined, virtually refused the naval contribution. Thereby it damned the whole scheme. In any case the Propositions would have aroused the jealousies of British manufacturers, who began forthwith to picture

England flooded by the products of cheap Irish labour, the *Gazetteer* indulging in the prophecy that Pitt's measure would lead to the transfer of the Royal Exchange from Cornhill to Cork.

Partly in order to gain new strength for this uphill fight, Pitt revived the Board of Trade under a new name, and placed at its head Charles Jenkinson. The future Lord Hawkesbury (subsequently first Earl of Liverpool) had served under North and possessed so good a knowledge of finance and industry that the Board far eclipsed its useless predecessor. But, by winning over Jenkinson, Pitt also designed to strengthen his party in debating power, a step very annoying to the Opposition. The ensuing debates on the measure as finally passed at Dublin were long and venomous. Despite an able pamphlet by George Rose in defence of Pitt's policy, merchants without and members within decried it as sealing the doom of England's greatness. Finally Pitt resolved on a compromise, rather less favourable to Ireland; and on 12th May 1785 his original Resolutions reappeared as twenty—skilfully adapted to meet British trade objections. At once the Foxite wits sought to expose his wiles :—

> " Thy favourite Resolutions greet :
> They're not much changed, there's no deceit !
> Pray be convinced, they're still the true ones,
> Each Resolution hath begotten new ones
> And, like their sires, all Irish born and bred."

Manufacturers also were not reassured by the changes.

A Manchester petition, signed by 120,000 persons, declaimed against the favour shown to Irish trade, and stated that the new policy would undermine our commercial prosperity. A few friends of Ireland opined that the new restrictions would condemn her to permanent dependence, and Fox cleverly focussed the two chief objections in the charge that Pitt was bartering English commerce against Irish slavery. After all the wranglings, that parliamentary tatler, Wraxall, confessed that not three dozen members could understand the problem. So the Bill was passed. But now Fox's incendiary *mot* set Ireland ablaze. Grattan and Flood exhausted the vocabulary of abuse on Pitt and his modified measure, and when the Irish Government postponed it indefinitely, Dublin forthwith illuminated.

This failure deeply distressed Pitt. It revealed, not only the insecurity of his hold over the British Parliament, but also the depth of the national and commercial prejudices which barred the way of reconciliation and progress. Doubtless his tactics were in part unwise. He should have endeavoured, first, to educate the public in both islands as to the benefits of free intercourse. Probably, also, he would have done well to postpone the whole question until, under his fostering care, trade had recovered full stability. The fact is that here, as so often, his intense hopefulness led him to overrate the influence of the teachings of Adam Smith and to underrate that of narrow particularism. The fate of Pitt's Irish proposals proves

that national and trade prejudices, if ruffled, readily prevail over the policy that gives up private and immediate gains in order to assure the larger good.

This defeat was one of three which he sustained in the session of 1785. Beaten, first on the Westminster election petition, then on his Irish proposals, he was also worsted on the subject of Reform. Here he stood on delicate ground. Pledged to Reform by his past, as also by a definite promise to Wyvill in December 1784, he could not postpone that issue beyond the following session. His speech of 18th April, in bringing forward his Reform Bill, was marked by "a most seductive eloquence" (says Wraxall). The chief proposal was the transference of members from thirty-six pocket boroughs to the larger counties and four large towns (probably Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, and Sheffield), as also to certain suburbs of London. He defended this change as reasonable and by no means without precedent; for after the Restoration thirty-six decayed boroughs were disfranchised. The Crown therefore had the right to withhold representation in such cases, and the principle was clear "that the principal places and not the decayed boroughs should be called upon to exercise the right of election." Nevertheless, as the possession of a pocket borough was a recognised form of property, he deprecated any squeamishness in treating it as such, and proposed to reimburse the owners, allotting £1,000,000 for that purpose. Here he was twitted with inconsistency by Fox, even by his own friend

Bankes; for if pocket boroughs were a nuisance profitable only to their owners, why pay compensation?

Thus, as often happens in legislation, Pitt by his moderation disgusted resolute Reformers and encouraged those who decried all change. Among these last was Burke. The champion of "Economical Reform" saw no inconsistency in branding Parliamentary Reform a mere *ignis fatuus*; and he and North carried the squires with him by declaring that the country cared not a jot for it. The House endorsed that verdict, rejecting the measure by 248 to 174. After this crushing defeat it is not surprising that Pitt shelved the subject. To suggest that his effort in 1785 was insincere is a mere freak of malicious fancy. His letters and conversations before the introduction of the measure breathe earnestness and hope; his efforts to enlist the support of friends are a sign of anxious care; and he was alike surprised and wounded by the overwhelming rejection of his measure. Nor need we explain his subsequent conduct by the lumbering argumentation of Wraxall (in 1812), "time, reflection, and the awful example held out to mankind by France subsequently restrained his ardour, finally inducing him rather to bear with the defects of the British Constitution, great as they may be, than to risk its total overthrow."

The plain truth is that the recent reforming fervour was but a phase incident to the disasters, the heavy taxation, and the growing discomforts of the American War. For the political creed of Washington, Britons

had small liking. As for Rousseau, they knew him not, or, if they knew him, they abhorred him. Then came the Lord George Gordon outbreak, which revealed, as by a flash, the brutality of the mob and the need of a monarch's strong control. Thereafter the peace and growing prosperity lulled them back to their age-long colossal contentment. The chief opponent of Pitt the reformer was Pitt the financier.

In his work of national revival Pitt found no subject which called more urgently for skill and energy than that of reconstructing the Navy. At the end of the American War several warships could scarcely crawl home, and a few foundered from rottenness. On a general survey (wrote Admiral Byam Martin) " there was not one ship in a condition to be placed in the return as fit for service without repair." Equally bad was the state of the dockyards. The letters of Sir Charles Middleton (the future Lord Barham) reveal an appalling condition of inefficiency and waste, the heritage of Lord Sandwich's *régime* of jobbery and corruption. Pitt's nomination of Admiral Lord Howe as First Lord was hailed as the beginning of better things ; for he had already held that post with credit. Many abuses were soon redressed, but others long defied reform. Howe also had sharp differences with the Navy Board, a separate body which controlled most of the naval finances. His drastic economies also brought him into hot disfavour with the service and into collision with the Comptroller, Middleton. Yet, despite their disagreements, they

managed to get far more work out of the dockyards, exacting longer hours of labour than before. They also placed many contracts with private yards.

As a recent historian has stated that Pitt "studiously neglected both the Navy and the Army," we may note that Byam Martin testifies to his intense interest in naval affairs, which he frequently discussed with the Comptroller. In short (wrote Martin), Pitt's mental capacity was such "that he mastered whatever he grappled with, and he grappled with everything that could tend to promote the credit and prosperity of his country." Thanks largely to his interest and to the liberal sums which he set aside for the Navy, England was safe by the end of 1786. A year earlier Middleton informed Pitt that he would then possess ninety sail-of-the-line and as many frigates; and, as will duly appear, the sight of the great fleet nearing completion probably averted war with France.

Nevertheless, in July 1788, Howe begged permission to resign. Five months earlier he had been sharply criticised in Parliament for placing so many officers on the retired list. Pitt, in his defence, rebuked those who were interfering with naval administration, and the hostile motion was withdrawn. Yet it is clear that Howe nursed a grievance; for afterwards he complained to a friend of the lack of support from Pitt in respect to economy, and said, "Mr Pitt talked of economy: I practised it." He added that Pitt never proffered requests for promotion for his friends; but Dundas often pestered him, and, when refused, carried

his complaints to the Prime Minister. Perhaps Pitt did not altogether regret the resignation of Howe, who was silent in Parliament and surly at the Admiralty; but the choice of his own brother, Lord Chatham, as Howe's successor, was a bad one; for, however suave in converse and able in council, yet by his slackness and persistent unpunctuality he impaired the efficiency of naval administration and, in 1790, led Middleton to resign by way of protest.

In truth, Pitt received little effective help from his colleagues and supporters. He himself was both the mainspring of the Executive and the Atlas of debate. The other Cabinet Ministers were pygmies, unfit to meet Fox or Sheridan. Jenkinson, though a distinct acquisition, was not always effective. Dundas, for all his pluck and versatility (and none equalled him in the skill with which he shifted his ground), was little more than a parliamentary manager. Wilberforce commanded infinite respect, but was less happy in the House than on the hustings. In the Lords, the Duke of Richmond, Master of the Ordnance, was generally disliked; and his unpopularity goes far to explain the defeat of the Government proposal (1786) to fortify the dockyard towns—a topic which will be treated in Chapter V.

Pitt's reverses in the sessions of 1785–6 were not, according to the usage of those times, such as to require his resignation, but they taught him caution. Thenceforward he paid more attention to party management, and gradually secured more cohesion.

He held strong ground, for the only alternative to him was a Fox-North Coalition, the general detestation of which won him several recruits from the Opposition. Pitt made skilful use of "patronage" to emphasise that trend, the most questionable of his methods being the frequent bestowal of peerages. The King had refused to grant any on the recommendation of Fox and North. Now, though sorely against his will, he was induced by Pitt to sanction many new creations, the total during his administration of seventeen years amounting to 140. This extensive use of honours for political ends is blameworthy, and exposes him to the charge brought by Wilberforce that he preferred to govern by "influence" rather than by principle. Nevertheless the new creations were on the whole judicious, and the House of Lords, ceasing to be the close preserve of a few governing families, became more fully representative of the abilities of the nation.

After 1785 Pitt displayed far less enterprise in regard to legislation. His activities in his two first years had been too great for a slow-moving people; and thenceforth he concentrated on the executive work of the Government. Here everything turned on finance; and he succeeded in paying off large amounts of the debt. The recovery of national credit was phenomenal, the price of Consols rising from $56\frac{1}{2}$ to $73\frac{1}{2}$ during the year 1785. The enhanced borrowing power not only enabled the rebuilding of the Navy to proceed at a rapid rate, but also retrieved the shattered prestige of Britain. While other lands (especially

France) were improvidently increasing their debts, the islanders were husbanding their resources for future emergencies; and that fact was understood at every Chancery of Europe. The story of British and French finance in these years goes far to explain the stability of the throne of George III and the collapse of that of Louis XVI amid the convulsions of 1789.

Certain critics of Pitt, by minimising his difficulties and emphasising his use of royal prerogative, have denied to him the highest parliamentary honours. This is to ignore the stolidity of Georgian England, the demoralisation of the old party system produced by the Fox-North *mésalliance*, and the mental independence which Pitt always maintained towards the King. Even his tactical failures in the first two years revealed his greatness; for no one seriously expected his fall. At the head of a mediocre Cabinet and of still fluid party groups, he and he alone saved the House of Commons from chaos, the national finances from collapse, and England herself from utter discredit.

CHAPTER IV

FOREIGN AFFAIRS (1785–1791)

THERE is a widespread impression that eighteenth-century Europe long led a sleepy bovine existence, until, of a sudden, the French Revolution stirred it to spasmodic energy. Nothing could be further from the truth. That oft-despised age teemed with the thoughts, the discoveries, the movements, even the political designs which moulded the course of its overpraised successor. No one can understand the nineteenth century who has not studied the last three fruitful decades of the eighteenth. Far from being torpid, they heaved with innovations; and it is hard to say whether the subversive efforts of monarchs or the innovating fervour of intellectuals made more potently for revolution. Here, of course, we are concerned only with the political designs which Pitt and his colleagues had to confront; but it is well to remember that behind those designs there loomed portents which warned all prudent statesmen to prepare against the deluge.

The first of these monarchical innovations emanated from the fertile brain of Joseph II. During many years this "crowned philosopher" had sought to

hustle together the scattered domains of the House of Hapsburg into a compact State. Detesting irregularities, whether on the map or in the statute book, he resolved to reign in his own right over a realm far stronger than that venerable mosaic, the Holy Roman Empire, of which he was the elective head. He therefore strove to form out of the Hapsburg hereditary States, a centralised Empire, able to confront the might of Catharine II of Russia, and overbear the opposition of Frederick the Great of Prussia. Early in 1785 he propounded the ingenious scheme of the Belgic-Bavarian Exchange, whereby he proposed to annex Bavaria and transplant her Elector from Munich to the Belgic (then Austrian) Netherlands. This forcible exchange would enable him to dominate South Germany, at the cost merely of his distant and troublesome Belgic provinces, which were often a source of friction with France. With her he was still allied, and secretly she approved the scheme, as opening up opportunities for uprooting the transplanted Elector and annexing the Belgic lands. Joseph had the open support of his other great Ally, Russia; for the ambitious Czarina, then intent on the conquest of Turkey, urgently needed his assistance, and therefore humoured him in this matter of the Belgic-Bavarian Exchange.

The project met with opposition only from two great States—from Great Britain, who foresaw the designs of France on Belgium, and from Prussia, because her Austrian rival would thenceforth control

the south and west of Germany. There were therefore solid reasons why England and Prussia should act together. Isolated, they must succumb to the overwhelming Franco-Austrian-Russian combination; acting in concert, they might perhaps save Germany from Austrian domination, the Netherlands from French control, and the Ottoman Empire from dissolution.

Such were the three chief problems facing Pitt and his Foreign Secretary, the Marquis of Carmarthen. The latter possessed little diplomatic ability and still less industry. His bent was towards a life of fashion adorned by light versification. But his devotion to the honour of England was deep, and his resignation of office in 1791 does him credit. Pitt was more fortunate in regard to ambassadors, having some of the ablest in our diplomatic history, namely Keith at Vienna, Harris at the Hague, Hugh Elliot at Copenhagen, and Joseph Ewart at Berlin. All were able, experienced, and devoted men, Harris (the future Lord Malmesbury) excelling in courtly grace, power of repartee, and resourcefulness, which had won renown at Madrid and Petersburg. On him now fell the brunt of a struggle which long seemed hopeless. Though a Foxite, he acceded to Pitt's request to act as Minister at the Hague, which he reached in December 1784.

On hearing of Joseph's pet scheme of exchange, Harris pronounced the general situation more critical than any since the Thirty Years' War; for France approved Joseph's encroachments on Dutch frontier

rights, and was also egging on the Dutch Patriots to undermine the authority of the Stadholder, which strengthened the otherwise weak union of those eight provinces. That official was a dull heavy man, mated with a beautiful and high-spirited consort, Wilhelmina, niece of Frederic the Great; but, as that aged cynic refused all help, the House of Orange seemed doomed. In vain did Harris and Ewart strive to rehabilitate England's influence at Berlin. In September 1785 when Lord Cornwallis proceeded thither to discuss the possibility of accord, he met with a chilling refusal. Frederic commended Pitt's finance, but coldly repelled all notion of active concert with England, because she had no force behind her.

Thus Britain's weakness left her isolated at this crisis. France, well-armed and strong in her alliances, now skilfully mediated between Joseph and the Dutch Provinces, persuading him to commute his claims for a large sum, the half of which she guaranteed. By this treaty (November 1785) she secured some hold over both parties, and concluded another with the Dutch which bound them to the wheels of her chariot.

Subsequent letters of Pitt, Carmarthen, and Harris breathe deep despondency. The Prime Minister, thrice defeated in the late session, could take no strong stand on foreign affairs, and urged Harris to play a waiting game. This he did, with consummate skill, but ever lost ground. The Patriots increased in power; and some of them favoured a scheme whereby the

Dutch East India Company (then almost bankrupt) would place Trincomalee, the best harbour in Ceylon, in French hands with a view to a joint conquest of British India. To us the project seems fantastic; but British power in India was then so precarious that a union of French and Dutch forces, based on that commanding post, would have placed everything at hazard. As will duly appear, Pitt came to see the urgent need of preventing French control of Dutch policy and resources, especially in the East. But, for the present, he held back despite the remonstrances of Carmarthen and Harris. The latter chafed at the seeming indifference of the Prime Minister to that cardinal axiom of British policy—the maintenance of the Netherlands against the aggression of a hostile military Power. His expostulations increased as province after province fell under the control of the "Patriots." Their Free Corps, paid and sometimes officered by France, terrorised the towns faithful to the Stadholder, and even loyal Zealand began to waver. Still Pitt held his hand. Parliament was apathetic, and the King (then in a mood of paternal cheese-paring) sharply discouraged a policy of adventure. Harris therefore had to continue to roll the stone uphill.

Pitt's caution, however exasperating, is surely defensible. Why should a nation which had not yet recovered from a calamitous war, risk another on behalf of a foreign faction which would not bestir itself? Besides, he had lately concluded with France

a commercial treaty, and desired to see its effects operate in the sphere of policy as well as commerce. To this pacific interlude we must now refer.

The initiative in this commercial *rapprochement* does not rest with him, but rather with the French statesman, Vergennes, and secondarily Shelburne. Probably Pitt had heard from the latter his hopes of commercial intercourse with the late enemy. Certainly Vergennes shared those enlightened views, and he seems to have inspired the article in the Treaty of Versailles which required the establishment of new commercial arrangements between Great Britain and France. Hitherto nothing definite had come of it, chiefly owing to Carmarthen's delays ; and Vergennes, anxious to force the issue, imposed tax after tax on British products (1784–5). Pitt's desire had been, first to bring about free trade with Ireland ; but when that proposal failed at Dublin, he turned somewhat tardily towards France, and on 16th October 1785 proposed to William Eden, a Northite who had had much experience in commercial affairs, to accept the post of British Commissioner at Paris. Pitt still proceeded cautiously, instituting trade inquiries, and not until the end of March 1786 did Eden cross to France, well primed with facts and figures.

Into the ensuing negotiations we cannot here enter. They were clogged by the anti-French convictions of Carmarthen (constantly fed by Harris with stories from the Hague) and by the jealousies of British and French manufacturers. Considering that the two

countries were at daggers drawn in Holland, and that their industries had been regarded as mutually blood-sucking, it is surprising that an agreement was ever reached. Much credit is due to Vergennes and his colleagues, and equally to Pitt and Eden; for to triumph over popular prejudice is harder in a Parliamentary system than under an absolute Monarchy. Burke and Fox illustrated this fact by bitterly opposing the treaty, the latter declaiming against France as the natural enemy. In reply, Pitt said: "To suppose that any nation can be unalterably the enemy of any other is weak and childish. It has its foundations neither in the experience of nations nor in the history of man."

The new Treaty of Versailles (26th September 1786) forms a landmark in human progress. The two countries, though on very strained terms politically, now mutually granted freedom of navigation to their European ports, and conceded free entry to their citizens without license or passport and free of capitation tax. They also lowered their tariffs, French wines now coming in on the favourable terms long conceded to those of Portugal. The highest French duty was now fixed at 30 per cent., on English beer. The import of silk and of silk goods alone remained prohibited on both sides. The great increase of British exports to France soon falsified the croakings of our Chamber of Manufacturers; and it seems likely that the French would also have benefited if their finances had not then become hopelessly deranged. As it was,

they could not endure the strain of the free competition of our machine-made goods, and though their wine growers prospered, their spinners and weavers soon complained of the cunning of Pitt in bringing about this ruinous treaty. It does not seem to have occurred to them that the chief responsibility rested with Vergennes, the father of the whole scheme, and with Calonne and the other minions of Versailles who gaily devastated French finances.

Meanwhile at the Hague a gleam of hope appeared; for the death of Frederic the Great in mid-August 1786 brought to the Prussian throne Wilhelmina's brother, Frederick William II. But his impulses soon wavered, probably under the luxurious pleadings of what our envoy called "the female appendices" of Potsdam; and, after offering a little cheap sympathy, he looked on unmoved at his sister's distress. Harris worked hard for her against the encroachments of the "Patriots," whose arrogance begot a reaction in her favour. Civil war broke out in June 1787; and on the 28th, when she set out for the Hague to appeal to the States General, she was detained by a Free Company and sent back to Nymegen. The outrage brought Frederick William to the verge of action and Pitt to immediate action. George also forgot his family economies and urged a close concert with Prussia. Thus the efforts of Carmarthen, Harris, and Ewart at last bore fruit.

Even now Frederick William wavered, and the outcome would have been doubtful but for two events

which paralysed the hostile combination of Powers: the appalling state of the French finances now became generally known, and, late in August, the Sultan declared war on Russia. As Austria was her Ally, she must be drawn into the war, and therefore could not play the French game by attacking Prussia. Consequently, the Austro-Franco-Russian combination was suddenly paralysed on both fronts, and on 7th September 1787 Frederick William, in response to British offers of help, ordered his troops towards the Dutch frontiers. A British fleet of forty sail-of-the-line was equipped to meet that of France, if she decided to draw the sword. But she merely rattled it; and the Prussians marched into Holland, occupying Amsterdam on 10th October and capturing several companies of French soldiers in disguise. The whole affair was over by mid-October.

In expectation of war with France, Pitt ordered Cornwallis, now Governor-General of India, to occupy Trincomalee in case France and the Dutch Patriots should attack us; and he prepared an expedition for the capture of the Cape of Good Hope—a sign of his deep concern for the communications with India. But he also sought a peaceful solution by sending his cousin, William Wyndham Grenville, on two missions, first to the Hague, then to Paris. The future Foreign Minister now gained his first laurels in diplomacy, for which his clear thinking, natural shrewdness, and cautious speech so eminently fitted him. Pitt evidently trusted his judgment as superior to that of the

emotional Harris or of the ornamental Duke of Dorset ; and Grenville early penetrated the secret that France could not move.

This wretched ending to her ostentatious intrigues in Holland and the easy triumph of Anglo-Prussian influence dealt a heavy blow at French prestige. And worse was to follow ; for, on the proposal of Prussia, to which Pitt and Carmarthen very cautiously acceded, an Anglo-Prusso-Dutch treaty of alliance was signed on 13th June 1788. The terms proved to be exasperating to the intriguers of Berlin, who were maturing vast schemes of aggrandisement. The aims of Pitt, on the contrary, were conservative. It is necessary to emphasise this statement, because the French historian, Sorel, on very slender evidence, has accused England of suggesting to Catharine II a partition of the Eastern world. The despatches which I have seen rebut the charge. Moreover, it is now known that the French Government seriously entertained the plan of seizing Crete, Egypt, or both, in view of the imminent collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The evidence collected by M. Charles-Roux in his work, *Les Origines de l'Expédition d'Égypte* (1910), establishes this fact, which, indeed, was so well known after 1784 as to invest the Dutch crisis with world-wide significance. French control over Holland would lead to control at Cape Town, Trincomalee, and Batavia, while the seizure of Egypt would secure the overland route. Owing to the financial and political collapse of France in 1787–8 these plans were postponed ; but

Bonaparte's Oriental campaign marked their resumption on a grandiose scale.

On the other hand, it is clear that Pitt made no aggressive use of the alliance with Prussia and Holland. The purport of the new Triple Alliance was defensive, binding the signatory Powers to the use of considerable forces (naval in England's case) to succour the one who should be attacked. Thus was restored the Balance of Power—then the only security for peace. During four years of rivalries and upheavals it averted war, and failed in 1792–3 only owing to the emergence of new forces which baffled the foresight of the wisest.

Postponing to the next chapter the story of the Nootka Sound dispute with Spain, we approach the Eastern crisis of 1791. It arose out of the long-matured schemes of Catharine and Joseph for the partition of the Turkish Empire. Scores of schemes to this effect had been drafted. The present one seemed infallible; for neither of the former Allies of Turkey, France and Prussia, could help her; and the French (as we have seen) contemplated the seizure of Egypt. In August 1787 the Sultan, taking courage from despair, and heartened by the incidence of famine in Russia, resolved to attack the Czarina, with results which were felt at Amsterdam, London, and Paris. Tardily and tamely enough, Joseph came to the aid of the hard-pressed Russians; and while these scarcely held their own in the South, they nearly lost Petersburg to the Swedes. For that adventurous monarch, Gustavus III, longed to regain some of

Sweden's former trans-Baltic lands, and would have done so had not Catharine cleverly retaliated by stirring up rebellion in Sweden and inciting the Danes to attack him.

Thus, as has often happened down to 1914, the Eastern Question stirred up a succession of duels as far as the Baltic. Catharine, the would-be aggressor, was furious at being attacked on two sides (though the Turco-Swedish *entente* was traditional), and roundly accused Pitt of having stirred up these wars. The accusation was superficial; for British diplomacy, though firm on the Dutch question, was elsewhere decidedly pacific. Pitt's aim throughout was to preserve the *status quo* and the Balance of Power. When, therefore, Gustavus was hard pressed by the Danish inroad, Hugh Elliot, British ambassador at Copenhagen, crossed the Sound and encouraged him with hopes of succour which nerved the defenders of Gottenburg to a successful resistance. Herein Elliot exceeded his instructions, but his spirited intervention, backed up from Berlin, saved Gustavus from ruin and Sweden from chaos.

By the autumn of 1788 the Triple Alliance (Great Britain, Prussia, and Holland) was a solid fact; and if the Prussian statesmen had helped on the cautiously conservative policy of Pitt, the smaller Powers might have been saved and the break-up of Europe averted. Berlin, however, preferred to fish in troubled waters, and to prepare to dictate its terms to all the combatants when thoroughly exhausted. Against these

schemes Pitt and Leeds (Carmarthen now became Duke of Leeds) strongly protested in their note of 24th June 1789, and urged the need of a general pacification on the basis outlined above. As France was then sliding into the abyss of Revolution, and other parts of the Continent were embroiled in strife, obviously a firm but honest policy was the last hope of averting a general collapse. But the disruptive forces prevailed; and though the Triple Alliance offered conditionally to support Gustavus, yet at a convenient opportunity he left his Turkish Allies in the lurch, and patched up a separate peace with Russia (August 1790).

This was the first blow to a plan, of which we find clear proofs in British despatches, to include Sweden, Turkey, and Poland in the Triple Alliance. The plan was very difficult of attainment; for Great Britain and Prussia differed on nearly every question which arose. Thus, when the Belgians revolted against the innovations of Joseph II and sent to London for help for their new Republic, Pitt and Leeds refused to countenance them, but Prussia was with difficulty restrained from annexing that land. Finally, after Joseph's death (February 1790), his brother and successor, Leopold II, managed to restore Hapsburg authority. But on the Belgian question the Anglo-Prussian alliance nearly foundered. Nevertheless, at the Conference of Reichenbach pressure from the Triple Alliance induced Austria to grant favourable terms of peace to the Turks, while Prussia withdrew her

grandiose claims (August 1790). The general result was the *status quo ante*, which British statesmen had recommended as the only means of unravelling the hopeless tangle. Unfortunately Catharine, relieved from the pressure of the Swedish war, persisted in her Turkish adventure. In other respects the Eastern horizon was at last beginning to clear.

The autumn of 1790 marks the climax of Pitt's diplomatic career. The Triple Alliance, though strained, could still give the law to an exhausted Europe. France was helpless. The ambitions of Spain in the Pacific had been checked. Belgium was still in the hands of a nominally friendly Power. Russia, rotten at the core, and oppressed by bad harvests, was feeling the drain of the long Turkish war; and firm handling of the Eastern Question might yet save Turkey and Poland from partition.

The year 1791 falsified these hopes. It witnessed the triumph of Catharine. As has been shown, she detached Gustavus from his Turkish Allies in order to press them the harder. Her skill and courage had their reward. On land her armies triumphed at all points, and yet she had enough men to meet Prussia's threats of armed mediation. Moreover, the Turks still had to reckon with Leopold of Austria, who shiftily raised against the Turks new claims which played the game of Catharine. Accordingly she resolved to reject the solution which the Triple Alliance sought to enforce, her nimble wit discerning in Frederick William of Prussia an enervated debauchee,

easily accessible to threats, and in Pitt a pacific opportunist, amenable to parliamentary pressure. She therefore set to work at Berlin and London. Mistresses and merchants were her agents. The London Press was plied with tales of the value of Russian commerce and the valuelessness of the Bug-Dniester district, now in dispute. The alliance with the Hohenzollerns (never popular) was arraigned as entailing a policy of adventure on behalf of them and the barbarous Turks.

Feeling soon ran so high in the City that Consols dropped from 80⅛, the lowest in February, to 75¼, the lowest in March. On the 29th the House listened with concern to Pitt's motion for additions to the Navy in order to check the aggrandisements of Russia and maintain the Balance of Power. Fox hotly denied that this principle was imperilled, and asserted that we had instigated both the Turks and Swedes to attack Russia; also that we had interfered in the affairs of every sovereign State and succeeded nowhere but in Holland. Why should we now help the Turks, and second the ill-judged policy of Prussia? At first these criticisms had little effect on Pitt's now compact following, which defeated Fox by a majority of 93. Yet the Opposition returned to the charge. On 12th April Grey spoke in a far more statesmanlike manner and moved six resolutions affirming that our chief interest lay in the preservation of peace, which was not endangered by Russia's acquisition of the fortified port of Oczakoff and the adjoining territory. The

ministerial majority now sank to 80. In the Upper House, Lord Grenville frigidly upheld the policy of Pitt and Leeds, but in private advised Pitt to shelve it. His advice was confirmed by Lord Auckland (formerly William Eden), now ambassador at the Hague, who reported that the Dutch naval authorities regarded, not Oczakoff, but Sevastopol as the real danger to Constantinople. Auckland pressed this view strongly on Pitt, and declaimed against the pro-Prussian energies of Ewart, our ambassador at Berlin, for whom he expressed dislike and contempt. Sign after sign made it clear that Britons would not go to war with Russia about Oczakoff, though Ewart assured Pitt that before united action Catharine would give way. In this he was probably right, but united action was impossible.

In mid-April Pitt bent before the storm and decided to send to Catharine modified proposals unsupported by the presence of a British fleet in the Baltic. His retreat was accomplished skilfully, but it entailed the resignation of the sensitive Duke of Leeds. Pitt also was deeply mortified, and he would gladly have retired but for the certainty "that confusion and the worst of consequences might be expected, and it would be abandoning the King." As for the present check, he ascribed it to his inability to make the House of Commons understand the importance of the issues at stake. In view of the divisions in the Cabinet and the apathy of the people, he acted wisely in patching up the affair as best he could. Nevertheless, this lame

conclusion sharply depressed British prestige and had the effect of compromising seriously the newly won liberties of Poland, which were then bound up with the maintenance both of the Ottoman Power and of the Triple Alliance. Turkey now receded to the Dniester, the south-east flank of Poland was uncovered, and the Triple Alliance virtually collapsed. Further, as Pitt stated in his speech of 10th May 1796, the refusal of the House to prevent the partition of Turkey precluded all thought of preventing that of Poland.

At first Pitt had taken little interest in foreign affairs. Oppressed as he was by the problems of finance, the Navy, India, Ireland, and party consolidation, he could spare little time for Continental problems. In them he was ill versed. Apart from one short visit to the North of France, he never saw the outside world; and his insular stiffness generally failed before southern versatility. He possessed neither the alluring charm nor the terrifying power of Chatham; and his Aristides attitude somewhat fretted the scions of Versailles and Vienna. Yet, though not richly dowered for diplomatic triumphs, his good sense and moderation achieved successes of great moment. His restraint in the early part of the Dutch dispute is no less admirable than his firmness at the crisis. Above all, his policy of delay enabled him to postpone the decision to a time when the last word rested with the British Navy.

Few English statesmen also would have dared to

frame a pacific commercial treaty with France at a time when the two countries were on the brink of war. As for his treatment of Spanish pretensions in 1790, it was no less firm and successful than his use of the Triple Alliance in the Eastern pacification. Hitherto he had applied the gradually reviving power of England with cautious tact but growing boldness; and the record of British foreign policy in the years 1785–90 is the finest study which our history affords of the careful adaptation of means to ends. If he failed in 1791 it was because the centripetal impulse, always strong in a nation after a disastrous war, suddenly acquired new vigour. Pitt believed that the average man would understand the need of supporting an ally, of checking imperial ambitions, and of maintaining the Balance of Power. He erred. The name Oczakoff stuck in the people's gorge.

This sudden insularisation of feeling called for a change of personality, as well as of policy, at the Foreign Office. It was registered by the appointment of Lord Grenville. Superficially, he had some drawbacks, but they were outweighed by solid advantages. Inferior to the Duke of Leeds in charm of manner and in the tactful management of men, he far excelled him in clearness of judgment, hard common sense, and unflagging industry. That a man dowered with these cardinal virtues of the craft should fail to rise to the first rank can be explained only by unattractiveness so ponderous as to prompt in the victim himself a wish to retire. Pitt, however, could not spare him (it was

at the end of 1794); and though they twice differed sharply on questions of war policy, yet no breach occurred until seven years later. Until then their union was nearly complete; and at times of acute strain the stern stuff that was in Grenville helped to stiffen the more pacific and pliable nature of Pitt. Of course there was no question now of Pitt writing a Foreign Office despatch as he had sometimes done for Leeds. The two cousins worked together as equals on terms of high mutual esteem, until, in February 1801, they fell victims to regal fanaticism, and thereafter drifted apart with results fatal to themselves and to England. Their loyal co-operation throughout that terrible decade, 1791–1801, is a tribute to their honesty, loyalty, and patriotism.

CHAPTER V

PITT AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE

PITT came to power at a time when the British Empire had sustained the severest loss in its long annals and seemed likely to sink beneath further blows dealt by the Houses of Bourbon. To strengthen all that remained of the Empire overseas was therefore a paramount duty.

By far the most important problem was that of India. There the French commodore, Suffren, had concluded the naval campaigns of 1782–3 to the advantage of the *fleur-de-lys*; and Britain was fortunate in ending the war in that quarter with no territorial loss and even with the gain of the port of Negapatam from the laggard diplomacy of the Dutch. But the fierce and wily Tippoo, ruler of Mysore, partly forced and partly tricked us into the disadvantageous Treaty of Mangalore (March 1784), which left that Malabar port in his hands as a gateway for French troops. In a short time the Franco-Dutch understanding also made the Dutch harbour of Trincomalee available for joint operations along the Coromandel coast. Thus the prospects of Warren Hastings, first Governor-General of British India, were gloomy. With the Cape

of Good Hope, Mauritius, the Ceylon ports, and Mangalore in unfriendly hands, and the British Navy and Treasury crippled and depleted, there was reason to fear the forward wing at Versailles, which worked for the expulsion of the British from India.

Further, our position there was far from sound. Grave irregularities still existed in the administration of the East India Company. Despite the prohibitions of Clive and Warren Hastings, its officials had not ceased privately to drive hard bargains with the natives. Nor did Britain gain much from India's loss. The tone of home politics was lowered by droves of "nabobs," who returned, swollen with Eastern gold and pride, to vulgarise the country-side, buy up pocket boroughs, and recoup themselves by jobbery at Westminster. Thus, for the sake of England as well as India, parliamentary control over the Company and its officials was urgently needed.

The rejection of Fox's India Bill by the Lords has been described. Pitt met the problems which it raised with no less promptitude than tact. On 5th January 1784 he conferred with officials of the East India Company, and sounded them as to the concessions which the Company was prepared to make, and what proposals it offered towards the difficult problem of administration. Thus, he proceeded on lines different from those taken by Fox and Burke. They treated the Company with hostility and scorn; he was prepared to meet it half-way, profit by its experience, and base his measure largely on resolutions recently

passed at Leadenhall Street. On 14th January, in introducing his India Bill, he modestly disclaimed all hope of attaining complete success in so complex a problem, and offered his measure as a tentative solution which at least was not recklessly subversive of chartered rights. He desired beneficially to control the Company, not to steal away its rights. By governmental control he meant control of British policy and the civil and military administration of our Indian territories. These (as the Directors admitted) must be administered henceforth by the Crown. He proposed, then, to institute a Board of Control differing from that of Fox in that it would consist, not of paid nominees of the party in power, but of two leading Ministers and a number of unpaid Privy Councillors to be determined by Parliament. Such a Board would be an organ of Government, not the tool of a party. To it must be submitted all the despatches, even those of a commercial character, drawn up by the Company, which, however, would have the right to appeal to the King against undue interference with purely commercial affairs. Unlike Fox, Pitt proposed that the Company should retain all patronage within its hands—a proviso both just to that body and conducive to the purity of parliamentary life.

As to the administration in British India, Pitt desired it to "have powers of large discretion, accompanied with the restraint of responsibility." That is, while obeying the Board of Control, it must possess enough

authority for any likely emergency. He endowed it with larger powers than Fox had done, authority being vested in a Governor-General and a Council of four (finally three). The Lieutenant Governors of Madras and Bombay were subjected to the control of the Governor-General at Calcutta, in regard to questions of policy and revenue. Finally, Pitt proposed to retrench in the Indian establishments and to erect at Westminster a tribunal for the trial of offences in India. He concluded thus: "Accept these ideas if they are worth your notice: strengthen them with your wisdom; mature them with your experience; or, in their room, establish a more adequate system, and I am happy." On 23rd January the House rejected his Bill by 222 votes to 214. But his modesty, the statesmanlike character of his proposals, and their superiority to those of Fox, certainly contributed to his overwhelming success at the ensuing general election.

His second India Bill, modelled closely on the first, passed in the summer session. Like his oratory, this, his first legislative effort, is remarkable for balance of judgment. While deferring at some points to the experience of the Directors, he yet restricted their functions and left the Company little more than a trading concern, though with its rights of patronage unimpaired. If Fox had had his way, "the spoils system" would have crept into English politics; and, for delivering us from that, Pitt deserves the gratitude of posterity. There were, however, two chief defects

in the Bill: first, the subordination of the Governor-General to his Council—a matter against which Pitt's first nominee, Earl Cornwallis, protested so successfully that in 1793 the Governor-General was empowered to set aside the decision of the Council, provided that he recorded his opinions in writing and accepted the responsibility. The other defect may be referred to Pitt's youth. Article XXXIV ran: "Whereas to pursue schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India are measures repugnant to the wish, the honour, and the policy of this nation," therefore the Company was forbidden "either to declare war or commence hostilities or enter into any treaty for making war" against any native prince, except on direct authorisation from home. Now, in those times, such authorisation would not reach Calcutta within ten or eleven months after the despatch of the original request; and to expect the Company on those terms to survive side by side with warlike chiefs like Tippoo, the Nizam, the Mahratta chiefs, and their French abettors, was to indulge in day-dreams. Doubtless it was this feature of Pitt's Bill which led to the angry comment of Warren Hastings that fifty Burkes, Foxes, and Francises could not have drawn up a worse measure. Forthwith he resigned his office (February 1785) and was fortunate in leaving India in comparative peace. Cornwallis soon set aside Pitt's impracticable proviso quoted above. It survives in his Bill as an interesting example of youthful idealism wholly inapplicable to the India of 1784. We may note here

that Pitt's India Act did not depress the Company's stock. In December 1783 (the month of Fox's Bill) it stood at 120. Early in 1787 it reached 163.

We now come to the vexed question of the impeachment of Warren Hastings. As is well known, that great proconsul had not long returned home before his vindictive enemy, Francis, began to incite Burke and others to frame articles of impeachment against him. To discuss the justice or injustice of the charges finally pressed home by the great orator in Westminster Hall is alien to our purpose. We are concerned solely with Pitt's responsibility in admitting, or furthering, the case for an impeachment. The question was of the first importance ; for it concerned the good name of Britain in India and the welfare of millions of natives. Further, the authority of Parliament as the ultimate court of appeal in Indian topics was involved ; for the reports of its Secret Committee, printed in 1782, formed a grave indictment, which Dundas pressed home against Hastings so forcibly that his recall was demanded. The Court of Proprietors, however, took the bold step of negativing it. Hastings was therefore kept in power for several months by the vote of that body.

The natural sequel to this embroglio was a legal inquiry ; and every gentleman situated as Hastings now was would have demanded it. Early in 1786 Major Scott, his agent in the House, did demand it, and challenged Burke to produce evidence for the charges which he had flung at Hastings. Burke and

Francis therefore set to work. Accordingly, the issue was perfectly plain. Some sort of trial must take place; and, having regard to the gravity of the charges, an impeachment before the Lords was the normal procedure. But the warping power of party politics soon became apparent. Because the leading accusers —Burke, Fox, Sheridan, and Francis—were Whigs, therefore most of the Tories smiled on the accused; and the favour shown him by the King and Queen was almost extravagant. Rumour therefore gave it out that Pitt, despite his earlier opposition, would veer round and support Hastings. Tactically, this would have been the prudent course; whereas that which he finally took offended George and strained the allegiance of his followers.

But the bent of Pitt's mind was rather legal than partisan. He viewed the question as one not for Parliament but for the Law Courts. And such it was. If English legal procedure had been more prompt and less expensive, the wisdom of thrashing out the whole affair would be indisputable. The fact is that the question is blurred for us by what came after. We remember the pomp of Westminster Hall, Burke's heroics, Sheridan's hysterics, the mean intrigues of Francis, the law's delays, and the final bankruptcy of the accused. But the question before the House in 1786 was essentially this: "Is it, or is it not, advisable to hold a judicial inquiry such as Hastings, by the mouth of his agent, now demands?"

During the debates of 17th–20th February 1786

Dundas and Pitt gave guarded answers. The former, who was the most influential member of the Board of Control, ought to have demanded an impeachment, but for a time he "hedged." While describing some of Hastings' acts as "highly culpable," he merely declared that he would not oppose an inquiry. Pitt's statement was more judicial. After deprecating the violence of Francis and the other accusers, he added: "I am neither a determined friend nor foe to Hastings, but I will support the principles of justice and equity. I recommend a calm dispassionate investigation, leaving to every man to follow the impulse of his own mind." The State documents demanded by Burke were then laid on the table.

As the evidence accumulated, Pitt's attitude stiffened. The crisis came on 13th June 1786, when Fox made his able and fierce attack on Hastings, especially concerning his harsh treatment of Cheit Sing, Rajah of Benares. During its course Pitt, whose opinion here coincided with that of Fox, beckoned to Wilberforce, the soul of probity, and they retired behind the Speaker's chair. "Does not this look very ill to you?" asked Pitt. "Very ill" was the reply. Those words ended any remaining doubts in the Minister's mind, and he soon rose to make the decisive speech. Duty forbade him (he said) to absent himself as he would have desired, for he felt the greatest difficulty and uneasiness in "being obliged to determine on judicial questions, the merits of which were so closely connected with Indian principles and

habits." He then reprobated the partisan treatment of the subject by Fox, and proceeded to set forth at length the subordinate relations of the Rajah to the British Governor-General. Thus far he implicitly exculpated Hastings. Not so was it when he referred to the methods used by the latter to levy money from Cheit Sing. When payment was slightly delayed, Hastings had exacted a fine of £500,000. Granting that Hastings had the right to impose a subsidy in aid of urgent military measures, Pitt declared that this last action was unjust and extortionate. "In fining the Rajah £500,000 for a mere delay to pay £50,000 (which he had actually paid), Mr Hastings had proceeded in an arbitrary, tyrannical manner and was not guided by any principle of reason and justice." On this count, then, Pitt concluded that a case, *prima facie*, had been made out for an impeachment; and the House agreed with him by 119 votes to 79.

Such are the essential facts in regard to Pitt's decision. Macaulay, in his well-known essay on Warren Hastings, has depicted Pitt's procedure as a sudden change of front, which staggered the House, and he explained it as probably due to the sinister influence of Dundas. In reality, there was no change of front. The previous conduct of both men, especially of Dundas, had pointed towards impeachment. They, however, waited for the evidence, the trend of which strengthened their conviction. In face of the last sentence quoted above from Pitt's speech of

13th June, who can doubt that that conviction was justified?

On 9th May 1787 Pitt spoke forth with even greater emphasis, declaring that the facts now before them formed—

> " a very grave, heavy, and serious accusation, such as was of magnitude sufficient, if substantiated in proof, to bring down on him very ample punishment. . . . In one part of the charge of Benares, there was great criminality; in that of the Princesses of Oude, there was still more; and *that*, indeed, he looked upon as the leading feature in the whole accusation. . . . Upon the whole, the House could no otherwise consult their own honour, the duty which they owed their country, and the ends of public justice than by sending up the impeachment to the House of Lords."

The Commons again adopted Pitt's view by 175 votes to 89.

That his decision was formed by degrees and after careful examination of the evidence appears from Dundas's letter of 21st March 1787 to Cornwallis: ". . . The truth is, when we [Pitt and Dundas] examined the various articles of charges against him, with his defences, they were so strong, and the defences so perfectly unsupported, it was impossible not to concur; and some of the articles will unquestionably go to the House of Lords." As for the popular belief that Pitt and Dundas were somehow responsible for the calamitous prolongation of the trial and the financial ruin of Hastings, it is well to remember (1) that the bringing of witnesses from India greatly

protracted the never speedy operations of an impeachment; (2) that many of the Lords (so General Grant stated to Cornwallis) sought to postpone the trial as long as possible and increase its expense, lest the Commons should bother them with too many impeachments; (3) that impeachment was the traditional method, but in this case was unexpectedly long and costly; (4) that the arguments of certain lawyers as to the impeachment being annulled by the dissolution of Parliament in May 1790, were refuted by Pitt on strictly constitutional grounds.

There, then, we may leave the matter, with the reflection that, in the interests of the peoples of India, Pitt did well to insist on a thorough investigation of charges of extortion and oppression, the correctness of which have in the main been substantiated. Thereafter it was clear that no position and no services, however high and splendid, would screen a British official from the operations of justice.

It is time now to notice other spheres in which Pitt influenced the fortunes of the British Empire. The first is that of national defence. Both at home and overseas we were badly prepared, Plymouth and Portsmouth being so ill protected as to be a crippling anxiety in the last war; for, as Pitt pointed out to the House on 27th February 1786, a large part of the Navy had been kept at home to guard its own docks, with the result that, until near the end, our strategy lacked the offensive character essential to

success. The Naval Board therefore strongly urged the fortification of those ports. It was not now a question of spending money either on a fleet or on land defences, for, as we have seen, by the year 1786 the Navy was thoroughly efficient, while its chief bases were so weak as to detain our chief forces in the Channel. Nevertheless Fox and Sheridan violently attacked the proposal as extravagant and "unconstitutional." The whole burden of its defence in the Commons rested with Pitt, who spoke twice and at great length without overcoming the prejudice against fortifications. As day dawned the House divided, and a mighty shout arose when it appeared that the numbers were equal. The Speaker, Cornwall, declared himself too exhausted to do more than pronounce against the motion. Nevertheless, Pitt and the Duke of Richmond were able to save money enough on other items to be able to put these two ports in a fair state of defence before the next great crisis, 1793. Accordingly, the fleet, when fully manned, was equal to the demands both of national and of imperial defence.

Pitt's anxiety respecting the British West Indies (then so valuable and so keenly coveted) appeared in his proposal (March 1789) to spend £218,000 for the defence of their chief ports. On a small scale his arguments reproduced those for the fortification of Plymouth and Portsmouth; for he showed that, in case of war, our West India squadron would be clogged by the defence of its bases in those islands; also that the fortification of the chief stations would enable even

small garrisons to hold out until the squadron was likely to come to the rescue. This proposal met with little demur, the House adopting it without a division. Whence it would appear, either that Jamaica and Barbados were considered more valuable than Devon and Hants; or that in 1786 half the Commons really believed the insinuations of Fox and Sheridan, that Plymouth and Portsmouth would become a danger to the liberties of the people.

Pitt's connection with the colonisation of Australia now claims attention. The planting of the first settlement at the Antipodes ought to have appealed to the popular imagination, yet, apart from a remarkable prophecy by Wraxall, as to the future greatness of that Continent as mistress of the Pacific, contemporary records devote far less space to it than to intrigues at Court and the chatter of the clubs. It must also be confessed that Pitt and his colleagues regarded Botany Bay chiefly as a means of relieving pressure on our overcrowded prisons.

The opening of a new phase in the history of the Empire resulted from the closing of the old phase. When the thirteen American colonies broke away from the mother country, they of course refused to take any more of her convicts. Hence the discomfort in our prisons and hulks became so great as to call for prompt action by the Home Secretary, Lord Sydney. Various remedies were proposed, the lethal device of sending convicts to the West African coast being con-

sidered only to be shelved, partly perhaps owing to the noble protests of Burke. H.M.S. *Nautilus* was then sent to discover a suitable site in South-west Africa, but failed to find any. Pitt also considered a plan for a settlement on the Caffre coast, probably to the east of the Cape of Good Hope. Finally, Sir Joseph Banks, naturalist in Cook's famous voyage, suggested Botany Bay, which was also warmly recommended by Matra, another of Cook's crew, and by Admiral Sir George Young. The two last desired to send out suitable persons from among the refugees of the United Empire Loyalists, many of whom were living in England in poverty. Sydney disregarded this suggestion, and in August 1786 proposed to send convicts thither. That Pitt took an interest in the plan is clear from his letter of 29th January 1787 on the establishment of a summary jurisdiction in Botany Bay.

Not until 12th May 1787 did the expedition set sail; and mid-January 1788 had passed before Governor Phillip landed his convicts at Botany Bay, soon transferring them to the site of Sydney. There he was in time to forestall by six days the advent of a French expedition. In this singular manner did Pitt and Sydney stumble upon the Isle of Continent. None of their actions has produced results so far reaching.

While Governor Phillip was grappling with dearth and discomfort at Port Jackson, the fortunes of the British race were placed at hazard on the Pacific coast of North America. Early in 1790 news reached

Whitehall that the Spanish Viceroy of Mexico had put forward claims to the possession of Nootka Sound, an excellent natural harbour of what is now known as Vancouver Island, and that Spanish officers had seized British traders, their ships and their small settlement. Spain not only endorsed these actions but claimed the coast as far north as the then Russian stations in Alaska, thus reviving her pretensions to the whole of the habitable Pacific coast of America and to the control of its commerce. Pitt's interest in this affair appears in his writing the despatch of 30th April, which was then signed by the Duke of Leeds. It demanded not only reparation for the injuries done to British subjects, but also renunciation of these grandiose claims. Within a few days Ministers gained from Parliament a vote of credit for a million sterling towards equipping a fleet. In all, the sum of £2,281,000 was spent on naval preparations, but, despite the growls of the Opposition, the money was well spent; for it made ready a great force which ensured the diplomatic defeat of Spain and raised England once more to a position of unquestioned maritime supremacy. In October 1790 Spain agreed to compensate the aggrieved British traders and to admit freedom of commerce at Nootka and the adjacent coast. The significance of the Nootka Sound affair was completely missed at Westminster, where the debates sank to the level of Bumbledon. But the Spaniards rightly saw in their surrender the beginning of the end of their domination of the Pacific Ocean.

The next year witnessed an important development in the life of Canada. It resulted mainly from the influx of a number of United Empire Loyalists from the United States into the land soon to be known as Upper Canada. These men, loyal to the core, yet desired representative institutions, as did the vocal part of the French population in the Montreal and Quebec areas. It was, however, difficult, if not impossible, to institute a single Assembly; for, apart from the barrier of distance, there were those of race, religion, and custom, the Quebec Act of 1774 having guaranteed to the French their own laws except in regard to criminal cases. Pitt and his colleagues therefore decided to separate Upper and Lower Canada, granting to each a semblance of self-government, while a Governor-General continued to exercise executive functions over the whole of Canada. Pitt's speeches on this topic showed that he had learnt the great lesson of 1776, and was hopeful for the future. He said that Canadian taxation was to be "left entirely to the wisdom of their own legislatures"; also that he hoped the French would in course of time wish to adopt English laws. As usual, he was too sanguine.

Such were the leading provisions of his Canada Act of 1791. It met with sharp criticism from the British minority of the Lower Province, while the Upper Province soon complained of exclusion from maritime trade by the fiscal barriers of Quebec. The difficulties were inherent both in the singular conformation of

Canada and in the distribution and peculiarities of its two peoples, which at that time defied solution. The Canada Act was a rough attempt at a temporary settlement; and it met with enough success to ensure the loyalty of all Canadians during the Anglo-American War of 1812–4.

The desire of Pitt for good relations with the United States was the fruit both of inheritance and of conviction. The son of Chatham could not but take deep interest in their mighty adolescence, and, as a pupil of Adam Smith, he desired to develop trade with them. One of his first public acts was to propose, early in 1783, commercial intercourse on mutually favourable terms. The strong opposition of our shipowners defeated his measure, and he did not renew the attempt when in power. Questions other than maritime caused friction, especially the omission of the United States to pay the stipulated compensation to the United Empire Loyalists for the losses and outrages to which they had been subjected. Accordingly the British Government retained the eight frontier posts on the further side of the new boundary. The exclusion of the United States shipping from the British West Indies was another grievance. For the settlement of these questions Pitt decided, late in 1790, to send a Minister to negotiate; and George Hammond was sent, but without result. The friction became keener after the Anglo-French rupture of 1793, when our Government denied the right of France to open to neutral ships

her colonial trade which she kept closed to them in time of peace. These disputes aroused hot feelings in the United States, until, on the advice of Hamilton, Washington decided to send Jay as envoy to London for a settlement. These pacific views in the main coincided with those of Pitt and Grenville; and, as Jay was soon on good terms with them (he described Pitt as "a very extraordinary man"), a treaty of amity and commerce was signed at London in November 1794. It caused little comment here, but in the States there arose a bellicose hubbub which subsided by degrees under the wise handling of the problem by Washington and Pitt, and, still more, under the insults hurled from Paris at the American Government. If Pitt and Grenville had offered a tithe of the provocations which came from the French Directory, an Anglo-American War must have broken forth. These statesmen have never received due praise for a tactful restraint which kept the United States from joining France in 1795 or the Armed Neutrals in 1800–1.

The brief sketches here essayed outline a little-known side of Pitt's career. He did much to strengthen the fabric of British rule both in India and Canada: he furthered the spread of our people to Australia and ultimately to British Columbia; while, as will duly appear, his actions during the French Wars showed his perception of the strategic importance of the Cape of Good Hope. Thanks also to him and Grenville

peace was maintained with the United States. And, with all his preoccupations at Westminster, he worked quietly to assure the efficiency of the Navy and the protection of the Channel and West India bases on which it operated.

CHAPTER VI

HOME AFFAIRS (1788–1792)

By a not unfitting Nemesis the unco' guid upbringing to which George subjected his sons drove them to the other extreme; but the swing of the pendulum was so violent as to produce results painful to the parents, unedifying to the public, and perilous to the dynasty. To thwart the King in politics was usual with the Hanoverian heirs, but never was the tension so acute as between George III and the future George IV. At all points they were opposed. The King was penurious, the Prince spendthrift; the one manipulated affairs for the Tories, the other used all the social resources of Carlton House to back up Fox and Sheridan; the one was moral, the other immoral; and when the King ordered his son to marry, that command confirmed him in his eclectic courses. In short, father and son had in common but one trait—obstinacy.

That this paternal defect should reappear under Whig colours in the son was certainly exasperating; and there can be little doubt that the intrigues, scandals, and swiftly mounting debts of Carlton House, added to the not infrequent escapades of the other

princes, was chiefly responsible for their father's lapse into lunacy. It cannot have been due to politics; for, except across the Channel, the horizon was clear near the end of the year 1788; and George crooned with satisfaction over the civil broils in France as a manifest visitation of Providence for her assistance to the American rebels. Like all narrow natures, he viewed everything from a personal standpoint. Therefore the blow must have been heavy when his chief foes were those who had just escaped from his own household.

The attack of lunacy precipitated the question of a Regency. At once Tippoo Sahib, the Triple Alliance, even the rise in Consols, were forgotten; for the Regent George was certain to undo the work of King George; Pitt would disappear and the revenge of the Whigs would begin. Fox, then travelling in Italy with Mrs Armistead, raced back with her from Bologna to London in nine days, to find the political world heaving with excitement as the tone of the royal bulletins darkened. The choice of the King's physicians became an affair of high policy. Pitt was hotly blamed for recommending the Rev. Dr Willis "who keeps a mad-house in Lincolnshire" (as Lord Sheffield phrased it); also for bringing in Dr Addington, who had long ceased to treat mental cases at Reading. But all the physicians were censured for issuing bulletins far from explicit, though, "according to ancient usage, oracular." Nevertheless, all six expressed fair hopes of a recovery, the case being normal,

but none ventured to predict a rapid recovery. On the whole, the reports favoured ratting from the ministerial ranks, and it set in strongly.

Pitt, believing the malady to be a passing one (such as had occurred ten years before), determined to restrict the powers of the Regent. On 10th December he moved in the House of Commons for the appointment of a committee to examine the journals of the House for precedents. To this Fox strongly objected as causing delay, and urged that the Prince of Wales had unquestionable right to the exercise of the executive power, as much as if the King had died. Pitt saw the error of this ultra-monarchist claim. With eyes flashing defiance he leaped to his feet and arraigned it as little short of treason to the Constitution. It belonged to Parliament, on behalf of the nation, to make such provision for the temporary emergency as would preserve unimpaired the interests of the sovereign and the welfare of the nation. Apart from Parliament, the Prince had no more right to the Regency than any other subject. Burke thereupon sneeringly referred to Pitt as a competitor for the Regency, and was called to order for his insulting expressions.

The storm now raged long and fiercely ; for behind the constitutional question there lurked that of self-interest. The Foxites, herein well backed by the Prince, wished to storm the citadel and entrench themselves behind a palisade of peerages and places. On the other hand, Fox's extravagant claims on behalf

of the Prince's "right" disgusted the country, and elicited Grenville's sarcastic comment: "Is it not wonderful that such great talents should be conducted with so little judgment?" At all points Fox played into Pitt's hands. Though a speedy triumph alone could avail (for the King would probably recover within a few weeks), yet the denial of the competence of Parliament enabled the Cabinet to press for a thorough examination into precedents, which required time. The more the whole question was debated outside, the warmer was the approval of Pitt's championship of the authority of Parliament; and it is worth noting that Portland, Loughborough, and Spencer, who now opposed him, supported his contentions during the very similar Regency crisis of 1801. For the present, popular sympathy was stirred to its depths by compassion for the King and Queen, the latter of whom the Prince treated with little consideration.

On the contrary, Pitt and his colleagues proposed (30th December) to vest in Queen Charlotte the control of the King's person and of the royal household; also that the power of the Prince as Regent should not extend to the royal property, or to the grant of any office or pension except during His Majesty's pleasure, or of any peerage, except on the King's sons who were of age. Against these limitations the Prince strongly protested as weakening the Administration; and while the battle swayed to and fro over the Regent's powers—the King recovered.

Then the tragi-comedy ended in farce. Carlton House and Brooks's Club were mantled in gloom. Fox's feelings were veiled amid the comely conventions of Bath, but Burke wearied Westminster with his ravings. Imagination falters at the scenes in the Whig mansions, whence had sallied the blue and buff dames to flaunt " seven-guinea Regency caps " in the faces of their rivals. Now they were fain pettishly to burn them or prudently to lay them up for another occasion, which did not occur until 1801. As for Pitt, he now went out more into society, and we can picture the quiet contempt with which he treated the " rats " (Lord Chancellor Thurlow at their head) or the humorous twinkle in his eyes as he rallied the waverers.

The Opposition took refuge in taunts as to his greed of place and power. On this topic we may quote the verdict of the Archbishop of Canterbury in a letter of 12th February to Eden (the future Lord Auckland), that " the general idea of Mr Pitt's principles and ability is much raised by the wonderful manner in which he has supported his business through the House of Commons, as appears every day by addresses unsought for and by the particular earnestness of all the great towns." Consols rose six points between January and May 1789. But while Pitt's influence and popularity increased, so too did the animosity of the Prince of Wales and his disappointed followers. Thenceforth, as we have seen, it became a prime duty not to abandon the King to that revengeful group ;

and the criticisms as to Pitt's subsequent clinging to power must be tempered by the reflection that the Premiership of Fox involved an almost certain return of the King's malady, a large measure of interference from Carlton House, and a *régime* of extravagance. The career of the Whig leader abounds in blunders, due largely to his easy good-nature, but none was so fatal as his close association with the Prince of Wales and his claim of unrestricted authority for him as Regent.

The most important result of the King's illness remains to be noted—the rehabilitation of monarchy. The English people is readily touched by the family troubles of the Royal House; and the sore tribulation of the King and Queen now endeared them to the populace. The City of London buzzed with joy at his recovery; and when he and his consort drove from Kew to Windsor the acclamations were almost unnerving. They furnished proof that at last the dynasty had struck its roots deep in English earth.

Very striking is the contrast with France. No decade in history furnishes instances of the reversal of dynastic fortunes so extraordinary as that of the years 1783–92. At the outset the French monarchy was victorious, that of Great Britain was humiliated; the King at Versailles was trusted and beloved, at Windsor he was distrusted and disliked; Louis seemed about to give the law to Europe, George was fain to accept terms from Europe and from his rebellious subjects. French credit was still strong, while for

a time that of the Island Power ominously declined. France strengthened her alliances, England's friendship was flouted by Frederic, her sole remaining ally.

But by 1792 these rôles are reversed. France is invaded by her former allies, Austria and Prussia, while England, in the midst of peace, controls the Balance of Power. Public credit at London is firmer than in the days of Chatham, while French finance oscillates on *assignats*; in 1791 English mobs assemble to the shouts of "Church and King," in France, shortly after, they despoil the Church and dethrone the King. What would have happened in France if she had found her Pitt it is idle to conjecture. But it is no idle fancy or partisan claim to ascribe our remarkable recovery to the dogged and conscientious work of the young statesman, not the least valuable part of which was the reconciliation of King and people under the ægis of a now definitely parliamentary monarchy.

Pitt, however, soon showed the reactionary side of his nature by again firmly opposing the annual motion for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts so far as concerned Protestant Dissenters. For some years it had been brought forward by Beaufoy, a vinegar manufacturer, whose probity of character and dignity of speech commanded the respect of the House—

> "Though from his speech severe invectives fell
> Sharp as the acid he delights to sell."

Often he had declaimed against the injustice inflicted on Dissenters, citing, *inter alia*, the case of John

Howard, who, though everywhere renowned for his services to humanity, could not take any office without exposing himself to the penalties of those antiquated Acts. Now (8th May 1789), when the flood of Reform was fast rising in France, he urged the House to end the exasperating policy of exclusion. Fox supported the motion, arguing that the admission of Dissenters to office would not endanger the Church. Pitt (as before in 1787) tried to prove that somehow it would weaken the Constitution. His pleas carried the day by 122 votes to 102.

Thus ended the last occasion on which Reform proposals could be discussed without prejudice from the French Revolution. That prejudice was soon apparent. Even by 2nd March 1790, when Beaufoy's motion came once more before the House, the clergy were alarmed at the sweeping anti-clerical measures lately carried in France. In vain did Fox point out that English Reform preceded, and radically differed from, the Gallic innovations, many of which he disapproved. Burke, though in the abstract professing sympathy with the motion, sounded the alarm against French principles, and, on the strength of some anti-Anglican talk in Lancashire, bade members rally to the defence of the Established Church. Pitt also protested against the new notions of equality, and dismissed as absurd the "right" to participate in civil offices. The House supported him by 294 votes to 105. Two days later it rejected without a vote Flood's motion for equal representation of the people

in Parliament. In this debate the cleavage between the Old and the New Whigs was once more apparent. The elegant and accomplished Windham, friend and disciple of Burke, declaimed against repairing their fabric in the hurricane season; and Pitt himself, while avowing his desire for Reform, thought it might be "disgraced" by the present inopportune proposal.

Such being his attitude in 1790, he, naturally enough, opposed Grey's motion for Reform on 30th April 1792; for by that time the Girondin enthusiasts in power at Paris were overturning the fabric of French society, and had just declared war on Austria. Their policy, levelling at home and aggressive abroad, aroused a storm of reprobation here, which was increased by the publication of Part II of Paine's *Rights of Man* and the demands of Radical clubs for sweeping changes on the Parisian model. Therefore Grey could not have made his motion at a worse time; and Pitt carried the House with him in opposing it. Referring to his former championship of Reform, he said that, after the American War, he deemed it a salutary measure calculated to restrict the growing power of the Crown, heal the prevalent discontents, unite Parliament more closely with the nation, and lessen the risk of national bankruptcy. But, he added, grievances had been redressed and the prosperity of the people assured. Where, then, was the need to make hazardous experiments? In view of the dangerous agitation now beginning in clubs and associations he opposed all Reform. This pronounce-

ment aroused some surprise, which was increased when he reprobated any relaxation of the penal laws against Unitarians, and issued stringent regulations against those who wrote or issued seditious works. Thereupon Grey branded Pitt as an apostate from the cause of freedom.

The charge was overstrained. Pitt may fairly be accused of timidity in opposing Reform in the year 1790. Surely if Reform would have strengthened England amid the difficulties of the year 1785, it would also in the spring of 1790 when apathy had given place to keen interest. The chief excuse now for shelving Reform was the excessive claims of the Radical wing; but it is indisputable that the only sure remedy of those extravagances was the removal of the grievances which gave colour to them. After the rupture with France Pitt's attitude towards this movement became more and more hostile. The fact is deplorable, but it is partly explained by the sympathies openly expressed by British democrats with the enemies of their country. Regarding their agitation as both dangerous and treasonable, he passed repressive laws and imprisoned scores of men. Such is the lamentable end to Pitt's connection with the Reform movement; but if his treatment of the subject was unwise and inconsistent, so, too, was the bovine apathy of Britons in 1785 and their Gallophile effervescence in and after 1792.

The fortunes of the movement for the Abolition of Slavery also varied so much, according to the course

of events in France and her colonies, that we may appropriately notice here Pitt's share in it. During many years the Society of Friends had protested against the trade in human flesh; and of late John Wesley, Granville Sharp, Clarkson, and Zachary Macaulay had called for its abolition. Wilberforce, after his conversion, felt called to take up this cause, and Pitt's sympathy with it appeared in his earnest advice to his friend to become its parliamentary champion. The movement soon met with bitter opposition. The shippers of Liverpool, Bristol, and London foretold ruin if this trade were cut off, and stated that it would merely be transferred to French and Spanish ships. West India planters also took alarm, and predicted a sharp falling off in sugar. Thus, in May 1788, when proposals for regulating the traffic came before Parliament, opinions were sharply divided. Finally, Pitt carried the measure on 10th June. The chief difficulty lay in the House of Lords where two members of the Cabinet, Thurlow and Sydney, spoke against it; but it passed into law. Late in the session Sydney resigned the Home Office, and was succeeded by William (later Lord) Grenville, a great accession of strength.

In May 1789 Wilberforce brought forward twelve resolutions, based on an official report, condemning the Slave Trade. In a speech of three and a half hours, he set forth its horrors, and maintained that honest commerce would ultimately benefit by its abolition. Pitt also declaredthat Great Britain was strong enough

to meet the risks that might be involved by the change. But the opponents were able to secure a hearing of complete evidence at the bar of the House, which involved postponement until the year 1790. Even then the evidence was being heard, the opponents of Abolition hoping to weary out the public. Herein they succeeded. By this time the French Revolution had prejudiced timid minds against all innovation; and as Thurlow, Dundas, and Lord Hawkesbury (formerly Mr Jenkinson) opposed the measure, Pitt did not make it a Government question at the general election of the summer of that year.

For this non-committal course he has been censured. It is not easy to pronounce judgment. Abolition was the greatest moral issue of that age, and to stake his all on it would have been a chivalrous act. On the other hand, the dispute with Spain was very threatening; the upheaval in the east of Europe continued; and the fate of Belgium caused some concern. In such circumstances a Prime Minister who honestly believes (as Pitt did) that his is the only Administration capable of riding out the storm, may well decide not to split it up, but rather to trust to the force of argument in the new Parliament.

Pitt increased his majority at the general election of the summer of 1790, and in the new House of Commons usually had a majority of about 120; but it was mainly Tory, and showed marked dislike of anything savouring of innovation. Consequently Pitt's position, though stronger than in the Parlia-

ment of 1784–90, was as weak as ever on all Reform topics. Anti-Jacobin prejudice always prevailed over his arguments; and, as will be seen, he encountered more than one serious check. Thurlow in the Lords was ever a thorn in his side; and his dismissal from the Woolsack being as yet impossible (it came about in 1792), Pitt induced the King to raise Grenville to the peerage to counteract the Chancellor's dangerous influence.

On 18th April 1791 Wilberforce introduced his Bill for preventing the further importation of slaves into the British West Indies. In a long and moving speech he besought the House to end the atrocities of slave-raids and the horrors of "the middle passage," also to wipe out the disgrace of slavery in our colonies. He pointed out that the trade occupied only one-thirtieth part of the tonnage of Liverpool, and even less at Bristol and London. Pitt then spoke in a strain calculated to convince the reason rather than heat the emotions. He declared that the trade violated the fundamental principles of justice, and he claimed that due care of the population in our West Indies would meet the needs of the planters. Fox gave his powerful support on the ground that all men were equal in rights. Two members, Mr (afterwards Lord) Stanley and Dudley Ryder were won over by these arguments, but, after a debate of two days, the Bill was thrown out by 163 votes to 88.

The prospects of Abolition now waned. After the sweeping measure of liberation of the slaves in the

French West Indies came their savage revolt, which somehow seemed to the muddled brain of John Bull an argument in favour of continuing to pour thousands of infuriated Africans into the British West Indies. Abolition was dubbed "Jacobinical," partly because Clarkson and a few other leaders tactlessly praised the work of that party. So sharp was the revulsion of feeling that Pitt, to the passing annoyance of Wilberforce, advised postponement of action in Parliament. When, however, that enthusiast persisted, he heartily supported him. In the long debate of 2nd April 1792 he made one of his finest speeches. At its close as the rays of dawn lit up the Hall, he caught prophetic inspiration from the glow, and pictured a renovated Africa as lit up with the blessings of civilisation. All was in vain. By a majority of 67 the House accepted Dundas's amendment in favour of gradual abolition, and by the narrow margin of 19 votes fixed the date for 1st January 1796. The Lords postponed the matter indefinitely.

Thereafter Wilberforce continued annually to bring the matter forward, but fruitlessly; for, early in 1793, the rupture with France came like a mighty cross-wind, blowing everything awry. Reform, Abolition, religious toleration, debt reduction—everything suffered. All that savoured of change was suspect. Gallophobia became the prevalent complaint, except with the left wing of the Whigs and the new party termed "Radical Reformers." With the Whig centre and right Pitt coalesced in July 1794; and as the official leader of

these Old Whigs, the Duke of Portland, strongly upheld the Trade, Pitt's difficulties with regard to Abolition ever increased. Wilberforce's pacifism separated him from Pitt for a time, but the latter still supported Abolition. Even in that terrible year, 1797, as Wilberforce noted, " Pitt stood stiffly by me " in debate, though the effort was fruitless. Only at one point did the Prime Minister wholly disappoint his friend, namely, in not burdening the peace negotiations of 1797 by requiring France to abolish the Trade. Here Wilberforce thought him wavering. Pitt of course knew that such a demand would doom to failure the peace effort on which he had set his heart.

Legend depicts Pitt as *par excellence* a party man. The sketch is a caricature. Few Prime Ministers have left their followers more liberty of action. On several questions, *e.g.* Reform, Abolition, the impeachment of Hastings, and the fortification of the dockyards, he left members free to vote according to their individual convictions, thereby exposing himself to the taunt that he cared not what became of his measures, so long as he remained in power. Most of these misrepresentations are based on the assumption that, if he did not act with Fox, he was a Tory. In reality he was neither a Foxite nor a Northite. He often called himself a Whig ; but, in truth, he tried to stand above party—a feat in which no one has quite succeeded. He did not ; and the grinding pressure of the Revolutionary War brought him more and more to depend on the Tories—a process common to him with Grenville,

Portland, and Windham. But neither he nor they ever shed their Whig sympathies.

Before the French War began to crystallise his nature, he showed marked independence of the Tory party by three actions. In May 1791 he supported Fox's Libel Bill, which safeguarded freedom of speech and writing. In May 1792 he procured the ejection of that arch-Tory, Thurlow, from his Cabinet; and in the following months he sought to frame a Coalition with the Whigs. The project failed, owing partly to the suspicions of Fox, but still more to the opposition of the King to their inclusion on terms of equality. The rumour that George then wished to get rid of Pitt is ill founded, but it testifies to a certain coolness between them. Pitt never sank to the position of the King's henchman; but, as he valued civic order more than individual freedom, he drifted farther away from Fox during the Gallic cyclones which wrecked our old party system.

In a memorable passage in the *Letters to Mary Gladstone*, the late Lord Acton declared that "Pitt the strongest of Ministers was among the weakest of legislators"; he then passed in brief review the merits and drawbacks of four other statesmen, and concluded that Gladstone possessed all the merits and none of the defects of the five. Certainly the legislative record of Gladstone is greater than that of Pitt. But it is only fair to remember that the great Liberal came to the front when the progressive forces of the Victorian Era were nearing their glorious climax;

when peace, prosperity, and faith in the destinies of man irradiated every path of life. Pitt, on the other hand, took up the burden of affairs for a beaten, disillusioned, and almost bankrupt nation. His was the task of turning a decline into a slow but steady rise: to Gladstone it fell to make prosperity more prosperous. Pitt's following was composite, but increasingly Tory; until the year 1884 Gladstone's was solidly and enthusiastically Liberal. Therefore the one had to drag on, the other had often to restrain, his followers. To the one was vouchsafed a bare decade of peace between two exhausting struggles; in the career of the other the Crimean and other smaller wars never dammed and hardly fretted the onward flow of thought and legislation. During the later and mainly barren part of Pitt's career the nation came to hate the thought of all innovation, and regarded Old Sarum and other excrescences of the constitution as its Palladia. In Gladstone's happier time the bounding pulse of Reform enthusiasm scarcely slackened even after the Home Rule experiment, and he never experienced the paralysis of a war which became largely a war against change. All things considered, the preservative efforts of Pitt were no less admirable than the progressive legislation of Gladstone. *Salus populi suprema lex.*

CHAPTER VII

THE RUPTURE WITH FRANCE

The attitude of a statesman to novel and startling events depends largely on his temperament. The eager impulsive man generally welcomes them because of their novelty ; but for this very reason the cautious man suspects and dislikes them. The vivacious soul darts towards every alluring paradise ; prudence clings to the beaten paths. Mankind in general falls into two classes, those who love the old and those who long to scrap the old.

In Pitt's nature hopefulness was usually blended with caution. Accordingly he welcomed the new if it did not conflict with the teachings of experience. In his youth he championed progressive ideas, and if his ardour cooled in and after 1785, it was because he found it impossible to outrun the pace of his slow-moving people. The French Revolution in its early stages aroused in him none of the hatred and disgust which it inspired among devoted Royalists. At the outset he viewed that great event with sympathy, even with hope. Though he never emulated the ecstatic outburst of Fox after the fall of the Bastille

—" How much is this the greatest event that has ever happened in the world, and how much the best "—still less did he echo Burke's tirade against the French as the ablest architects of ruin ever seen. In truth, the Revolution appeared to him a series of convulsions due to political folly, but likely to lead to a happier future ; and during those days of promise in the early spring of 1790 he prophesied that France would stand forth as one of the most brilliant Powers of Europe, enjoying the kind of liberty which Englishmen venerated.

The happenings of the following years falsified this prediction ; but even when that viewy and conceited group, the Girondins, seized on power and compelled Louis XVI to declare war on Austria, Pitt and Grenville maintained a strict neutrality highly distasteful to the other monarchs. Grenville, it will be remembered, came to the Foreign Office in April 1791 to uphold the policy of non-intervention. Pitt and he were soon in close touch ; and the despatches of Grenville embodied the policy of Pitt.

It underwent no change owing to the fall of the French Monarchy (10th August 1792). Our ambassador, Earl Gower, was recalled from Paris, but (as Grenville explained) only because he had been accredited to Louis XVI. Chauvelin, the French ambassador in London, was also informed that he could be received only unofficially (as happened occasionally up to 13th January 1793). The assurances of neutrality given to France in the spring of

1792 were in no sense belied on the establishment of the French Republic at the autumnal equinox. Throughout that terribly rainy autumn Pitt spent most of his time at Walmer Castle (the King had recently appointed him Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports) and wrote few letters; but the few which survive imply complete accord with Grenville as to the desirability of non-intervention. Equally noteworthy is it that George III, who is generally credited with warlike aims, wrote on 25th November that he hoped to see the conclusion of peace on the Continent, if it could be attained " to the *real* satisfaction of the parties concerned."

In the last days of November a change came over the scene. The French victory at Jemappes, speedily followed by the conquest of the Austrian (Belgic) Netherlands, induced at Paris a mood of boundless confidence which found expression in decrees threatening to the security of neighbouring states. That of 16th November set aside Dutch control over the Lower Scheldt, in order to allow the passage of French warships up that river to assist in the siege of Antwerp. This high-handed action alarmed Pitt and Grenville, who saw in it a disregard of treaties in general, a defiance of the Triple Alliance of 1688, and an eventual threat to London. The Stadholder also privately appealed for help to the British Government in case the Dutch Republic were attacked; for his sluggishness and the schisms among his people portended

victory to the French arms if they pressed on. Thus, at the end of the year 1792, the danger of French supremacy revived in a form acuter even than in 1787, and Great Britain was better able to meet it in every respect but one.

The exception was in the sphere of opinion. The tide of democratic feeling, long sluggish, was now rising fast in Great Britain in sympathy with the forces of democracy and nationality now at the flood in France. Man is an imitative creature; and though there was no more reason for the present discontent with our Constitution than for the complete content with it of recent years, yet unrest everywhere prevailed. Early in 1792 it was increased by two events: first, the publication in cheap form of the second part of Paine's *Rights of Man*, which popularised the French doctrines and foretold the sweeping triumph of democracy; secondly, Pitt's opposition to Grey's motion of Parliamentary Reform, which has already been noticed. The result was the partial gallicising of the English Reform movement, and a consequent hardening of the official opposition, especially when several of the new popular clubs sent addresses of congratulation to the now triumphant French Republic. By an unhappy coincidence most of these addresses were read out to that body at a time when the tension became acute between the two Governments. Accordingly at Paris the belief prevailed that the British people longed to overturn their

Government; while at Westminster the Radical clubs were regarded as tools of an almost hostile nation.

Both impressions were wrong; but they were so deeply rooted as to contribute to the rupture. The French rulers looked on England as ripe for revolution; while Pitt and Grenville deemed them dangerous busybodies, with whom unflinching firmness was the only safe procedure. Probably a far better course would have been a frank explanation both with the French Convention and the Radical clubs. But such methods were not to come for well-nigh a century, and were utterly uncongenial to Pitt and Grenville. Stiff to the verge of haughtiness, they followed the old ways at the dawn of the new age in which public opinion was to become the decisive factor. They decided to call out the Militia in the Home Counties, and the King's Speech of 13th December denounced the conduct of malcontents "acting in concert with persons in foreign parts." On this topic Grenville was even more alarmist than Pitt; and, in the belief that the French aggressive decrees were designed to encourage our malcontents, he resolved to maintain a rigid front. Thus, English reforming zeal and Gallic effervescence, interacting one upon the other, aroused at once the fears of Governments and the subversive passions of the peoples. Consequently, the Scheldt affair, which with good-will might have been settled in a month, became the final cause of a long and disastrous war. France refused to withdraw

her obnoxious decree, and the British Government, regarding that refusal as a proof of a design to annex Antwerp and invade Holland, again stiffened its attitude.

As often happens, the dispute was envenomed by personal pique. That vain envoy, Chauvelin, irritated at not being officially recognised, consorted with the leaders of the Opposition, an affront which fretted Grenville and exacerbated their interviews. Pitt twice saw a far more tactful diplomat, Maret (the future Duc de Bassano); but their mutual good-will aroused the jealousy of Chauvelin. The friction increased after the passing of an Aliens Bill for watching closely the activities of all foreigners. Chauvelin rightly protested against it as contravening the "Eden" treaty of 1786, and the excitable group then in power at Paris began to threaten reprisals, or even an invasion. In the case of England, such threats were idle, but all the evidence coming from Holland portended an easy conquest by the army of Dumouriez near its southern frontier.

There was the real danger. Matters were made worse by the French order of 13th January 1793 for the equipment of thirty sail-of-the-line and twenty frigates, besides a large shipbuilding programme. Thus everything tended towards war, which doubtless would have broken out quite apart from the execution of Louis XVI. That event, on 21st January, merely precipitated a rupture already imminent. On receipt of the news George III held a Council at which he

signed an order for the departure of Chauvelin within a week. That envoy departed at once, and on his arrival at Paris gave the final tilt towards hostilities. On 1st February 1793 the French Convention unanimously declared war against Great Britain and the Dutch Republic. The inclusion of the latter State, which had been nervously pacific, revealed the aggressive spirit then uppermost at Paris. The dominant faction hoped that the Dutch Netherlands would fall an easy prey, yielding vast resources in ships, colonies, and gold. Then, with the help of English malcontents, the Island Power could be invaded or overawed. To us the programme seems crude, but it should be remembered that the men in power at Paris were novices who had everywhere succeeded by sheer audacity, and now expected further triumphs in the faction-torn lands which they confidently challenged. Brissot, whose inflammatory speech on 1st February 1793 carried the Convention by storm, was afterwards guillotined by the Jacobins, partly for those warlike vaunts.

As to the conduct of the negotiations by Pitt and Grenville, it must be pronounced correct to the verge of pedantry. In the early stages of the Scheldt dispute they could, without loss of dignity, have appealed to the French Government by a special mission of a friend of peace, like Auckland ; for the personal touch nowhere counts for so much as at Paris. But little was done, except by a series of frigid notes which chafed both Chauvelin and his Government. Further,

British policy was shrouded in secrecy—a fact which enabled some of the Opposition leaders to accuse Ministers of having gratuitously attacked France. Fox reprobated every act of Pitt and Grenville. Why had they not forbidden Austria and Prussia to attack France? Why had they withdrawn Gower from Paris and not fully recognised Chauvelin and the French Republic? Why had they made so much of the Scheldt affair and passed the Aliens Bill? In fine, had not their expulsion of Chauvelin precipitated war? These reckless charges were echoed by the new clubs; and Fox there earned loud applause by drinking to the Majesty of the People. His extravagances at the time of the execution of Louis split the Whig party in twain. The Old Whigs, urged on by Windham, Malmesbury, Sir Gilbert Elliot, and others, decided to support the Pitt Administration. But for the nervous hesitancy of Portland their chief men would have joined it at once. As it was, only that sinister figure, Lord Loughborough, came in as Lord Chancellor, in place of Thurlow—a doubtful gain, as the event proved. Not until July 1794 did Portland swallow his scruples and take office, and not till then did Great Britain present an almost united front to the foe.

Pitt has often been accused of going to war with France in order to put down the Revolution there and Reform agitation here. Apart from his recent renunciation of Reform, little can be urged in support of this charge. It is, however, applicable to Grenville,

who, believing in a very close connection between the actions of France in Holland and her encouragement of malcontents in England, urged the need of the utmost firmness " while the power of resistance is yet in our hands." This apprehension probably accounts for the embodying of part of the Militia and the passing of the Aliens Bill, events which caused justifiable annoyance at Paris. There are, I believe, no words of Pitt which savour so much of panic as these of Grenville. For the Prime Minister the present dispute with France resembled that of 1786–7, in that her domination of the Dutch Netherlands was the real point at issue. Now, to prevent such domination had been a cardinal principle of British foreign policy since the Battle of Sluys in 1340, and its counterpart determined that policy in 1914.

Herein lay the significance of the dispute which began in November 1792. As can be seen from Grenville's despatches, the change from non-intervention to resolute opposition to the new French claims occurred between the 25th and the 27th of that month, the very days when he heard of the French action respecting the Scheldt. The King and Pitt approved his new attitude. It is therefore clear that the British Government accepted war with France, not because she was a Republic, but because her recent conduct contravened both treaty obligations and a cardinal axiom of British policy. On this fundamental issue the agreement between George III and his Ministers was complete. But he and they differed

widely in outlook. For the King the war was a struggle to put down odious and dangerous regicides. To Grenville it was largely a means of safeguarding the British Constitution. To Pitt it was always the last and most regrettable means of attaining national security.

CHAPTER VIII

PITT AND THE WAR (1793–1795)

HITHERTO Pitt had found a sphere eminently suited for the exercise of his genius. The recovery of England in the decade 1783–92, which was largely due to him, is the most remarkable in her history. But early in 1793 he had perforce to take up novel problems, for which nature had ill equipped him. As we have seen, in fundamental traits he resembled the Grenvilles rather than the Pitts. True, flashes of his father's fire often lit up the Grenville solidity; but these scintillations occurred chiefly in his speeches; they never illumined his war counsels. He had neither Chatham's eye for a campaign, his power of sifting the primary from the secondary aim, nor his magical faculty of selecting and inspiring the right leaders.

Yet the onslaughts that have been made on Pitt as War Minister, by comparison with his father, are unjust in some important particulars. They leave out of count the fact that in Frederic the Great and Ferdinand of Brunswick Chatham found ready to hand by far the ablest continental commanders of that age. For a true estimate between Chatham and his

son as War Ministers we ought mentally to substitute for Frederic and Ferdinand the titled German mediocrities who damned the Monarchist cause in 1793–5; also to replace Soubise and Contades by Hoche and Masséna; above all, to imagine the neglected troops of the *ancien régime* replaced by the enthusiastic levies of the Republic. Far different was it to fight the France of la Pompadour and the France of Carnot. Moreover, the England of Chatham was far more united and warlike than the England of his son.

Finally, Chatham knew from the start that England must rely mainly on herself; whereas Pitt and Grenville naturally, but, as the event proved, wrongly, counted on the great and highly trained armies of Austria and Prussia. In 1793 the Island Power came in merely as an accessory to what was already a great Coalition, comprising those Powers and Sardinia. In quick succession it was joined by the Holy Roman Empire, Spain, Naples, and Portugal, while the Czarina, Catharine II, sent perniciously profuse promises of help. In such a case all the experts expected France speedily to succumb. Thus, in October 1793 Sir Charles Middleton (the future Lord Barham) wrote that we need not build battleships but only frigates and light craft for commerce protection. Similar illusions prevailed as to the war on land; and they account largely for the loss of the first campaign. The worst of misfortunes for England is to begin a war with brilliant prospects; for they confirm the national vice of sanguine slackness. It

was the salvation of Chatham that the Seven Years' War opened with a succession of defeats. It was the salvation of Revolutionary France that she underwent a series of disasters from March to August 1793; for they drove her to national conscription.

On the other hand, the imposing fabric of the First Coalition was already secretly undermined. On 12th January 1793 Pitt and Grenville heard officially that Prussia intended to seize part of Poland, and, if humoured there by Austria, to withdraw her opposition to the long-cherished Hapsburg plan of the Belgic-Bavarian exchange. The news came as a bolt from the blue. Obviously, Prussia would now concentrate most of her forces on the East, while Austria's hoped-for recovery of Belgium from the French would be merely for bargaining purposes. These were the two cankers gnawing at the heart of an outwardly imposing league. After Britain joined it, her duty was to unite the German Powers wholeheartedly against France. In this she was destined to fail. In vain did Pitt and Grenville strive to stimulate their exertions in the West by the hope of larger acquisitions from France. A bargain was struck in April, and was foolishly revealed in a proclamation soon issued by Coburg, the Austrian Commander-in-Chief, with results inspiriting to the French defenders.

Nevertheless, at first all went well. Our troops helped to defend Holland against Dumouriez; the Allied armies penetrated into France; and the capture of Valenciennes (28th July) promised to open the way

to Paris. Thereafter Prussia relaxed her efforts, and the British force diverged westwards, to press the siege of Dunkirk—a step for which George III was largely responsible. But these dangers only spurred on France to more vehement exertions. The now dominant Jacobins put forth frantic efforts, and, late in August, enforced conscription in all but name.

Far different was the procedure of the Allies. It is the curse of an extensive league that each member seeks to shift the burden on others; and the Central Powers with one consent treated Great Britain as the willing horse. She, forsooth, was to fill the gaps in the west caused by their diversion of troops to the Vistula. To this unlooked-for strain the British army was wholly unequal. Early in 1792, when the outlook seemed peaceful, Pitt had very unwisely reduced it to 17,013 men. A year later he needed an army of 100,000 men. Our Allies required a strong British contingent in Flanders. India needed protection and Ireland a strong garrison. The West Indies, threatened by a French squadron, which in February slipped away from Brest with troops, called for aid; and a French Royalist deputation from Hayti assigned that splendid colony to us as protectors against the rebellious negroes. Then, too, our Mediterranean Allies sent urgent requests for a great British fleet to guard them and prevent a French invasion of Italy along the Riviera. In 1793 the Navy was unequal to these demands, for Pitt had of late cashiered 2000

seamen, and now the Admiralty had to sweep in many thousands by the press-gang.

Pitt paid dearly for his ill-timed economies. With his skeleton army it was impossible to satisfy a quarter of these demands; but clear thinking might have led the Cabinet to concentrate on the most important. Obviously, the first need was to save the Dutch, and this was effected by the middle of March. Thereafter the British force might have been almost entirely withdrawn from Flanders either for operations against the French colonies, or to assist the Royalist peasants of Brittany and Poitou. The former course (the traditional rôle of the British army) was strongly urged by the Duke of Richmond: for the latter, Burke, Windham, and the ultra-Royalist group pleaded with equal force and ability. They inveighed against the German Powers as ruining the monarchical cause by their egotism. Better far was it to act with peasants who honestly sought to restore the French throne, than with rulers whose Royalist professions were merely a cloak for self aggrandisement.

Burke's pleas were unanswerable if only the French Royalist bands could occupy some strong base on the north-western coast. But they failed to do so for any length of time, and, as the Republicans occupied the best ports, and their Brest fleet long held the Quiberon roadstead, no prolonged concert was possible with the brave peasants. Owing to the rawness of his crews, bad luck as to weather, and an excessive amount of

convoying work thrust upon him, Howe's campaign with the Channel Fleet off that coast was singularly ineffective. Consequently, naval supremacy was not assured, and the lack of it paralysed all extensive co-operation with the Breton and Vendéan bands. Little therefore came of the sporadic efforts in that quarter. Moreover, on strictly military grounds, there were advantages in throwing our weight on to the north-eastern frontier of France, which offered the readiest approach to Paris.

Political motives necessarily bulk large in a Coalition war; and it has been England's traditional rôle to act as the cement to an otherwise loose union. Pre-eminently was that the case in the Mediterranean in 1793. As Spain, Sardinia, and Naples demanded her protection against the powerful Toulon fleet, the Admiralty despatched Hood's superior force in April-May, and it helped to stay the French advance from Nice towards Mentone. An astonishing windfall gladdened Hood late in August. The French Royalists, now masters of Toulon, placed that fortress and fleet, as a deposit for Louis XVII, in his hands and those of the Spanish admiral, Langara; and Hood soon wrote home that he was well established there and expected the war soon to end. Accordingly, the Pitt Cabinet relaxed its efforts in that quarter; and when Austria failed to send from Milan the 5000 troops she had promised for Toulon, the place was lost in mid-December. Spain and Naples, which sent very inefficient troops to Toulon, were disgusted

at this disaster, whereby Italy was once more laid open to invasion. With the aim of averting such a catastrophe, Hood in the spring and summer of 1794 occupied Corsica, which proved to be a drain on the army second only to that which set in from the West Indies.

These valuable islands could not be abandoned to the French attempts at revolutionising them. "Liberty and Equality" among the negroes were more to be dreaded than the French troops; and the persistence of Jacobinical propaganda compelled us to efforts which the white population (English or French) demanded as a right. Thus, the diffuseness of our naval and military operations resulted chiefly from the diffuseness of the British Empire, of its commercial interests, and of the Coalition of which insensibly we became the directors. The recent World War revealed the same inherent difficulties. In some respects they were greater in 1793 than in 1914. The French Atlantic fleet and cruisers were at large, but the German warships were at once bottled up. Also, down to 1918, the Allies, except Russia, kept troth. In the third year of the French war, Prussia and Spain played us false. Therefore, in relying largely on our continental Allies, Pitt was leaning on a broken reed. In November 1793 Burke wrote to Windham that Ministers were "bewildered in the labyrinth of their own policies." The charge was true. But Burke never understood either their difficulties or the insuperable obstacles to his alternative

plan of close co-operation with errant bands of Breton peasants, who had little organisation and no sure base on the coast.

A serious addition to Pitt's difficulties was the divided state of public opinion at home. The real causes of the war being shrouded in mystery, the nation gave him no solid support. For personal reasons the Old Whigs were slow to join him, and the war was dubbed a party affair. Their accession in July 1794 brought about almost complete national unity, but caused little change in war policy. Indeed, they strengthened him more in debate than in council. Portland became Home Secretary in place of Dundas, for whom the Cabinet Secretaryship of War was now created. Windham took a non-Cabinet post as Secretary of War. Neither was equal to his task. But, by substituting the Marquis Cornwallis for the Duke of Richmond at the Ordnance, Pitt gained the advice in the Cabinet of a very experienced soldier. It has been recently asserted that Pitt and Dundas decided offhand all questions of war policy. As to this we may note Pitt's written statement to Windham that he was extremely diffident on all military matters (September 1794). Also in February-March 1795 Cornwallis wrote to his friend Ross that they were carefully discussed by the whole Cabinet, and that the real difficulty lay in the hopeless muddles of army organisation. The Marquis doubted whether the Duke of York, who was then appointed chief officer on the Staff, would effect any improvement. Whence

it appears, on the evidence of a soldier, that the soldiers were more to blame than "the politicians."

That Pitt struggled to improve matters in both the services is apparent from two very drastic actions at the close of 1794. He required the resignation of his brother, the second Earl of Chatham, from the Admiralty, where his slackness clogged the operations. Further, he pressed George III to recall the Duke of York from the command of the army in Flanders, where he was unable not only to hold back the enemy, but even to maintain discipline among the officers, many of whom were grossly insubordinate and needed sterner control. Thereby Pitt saved the army from a complete break-up and the Prince from open disgrace; but the recall came as a bitter blow to the King. George hotly protested, but finally yielded to the determined Minister.

In reality the Duke of York was the victim of Prussia's bad faith. Despite the Anglo-Dutch subsidy treaty granted her in April 1794, she did next to nothing with the stipulated force of 62,000 men. The Austrians being also handled ineffectively, the Allies were driven back, lost Belgium, and uncovered the Dutch frontier. At the close of 1794 Pitt wrote to George III proposing the transfer of the British force from Flanders to la Vendée; but the King refused, obviously because his beloved Electorate of Hanover would be uncovered. Abercromby therefore retreated into South Holland. As a last resort for saving Holland, Pitt despatched Lord Malmesbury

to beseech the Duke of Brunswick to take command of the defending forces; but the Duke refused, owing to the veto of the Prussian monarch. To complete our misfortunes, a severe frost enabled the French pursuers to cross the Hollands Diep, while the defenders could not flood the country.

Thus closed the disastrous year 1794. The Allies had everywhere lost ground, and lost mutual confidence. Holland, the defence of which had embroiled us in the Continental War, now lay at the feet of the French, who were also sweeping through the Rhineland. On the other hand, the maritime war had progressed favourably. Lord Howe gained a brilliant tactical success on 1st June over a slightly superior French fleet; the acquisition of Corsica enabled our Mediterranean fleet for the time to hamper the French advance along the Riviera; and in the West Indies, Martinique, St Lucia, and parts of Hayti had fallen to the British flag. But yellow fever began to decimate our ranks, and our Allies took umbrage at these colonial gains, the Austrian Chancellor proffering the claim that at the peace they must go back to France in consideration of her giving up her continental conquests. At that very time Russia, Prussia, and Austria were planning the Third Partition of Poland, which brought them immense domains.

In view of the slackness or bad faith of the Allies, Great Britain would have been justified in withdrawing from the Coalition, in order to exert her full pressure upon the coasts and colonies of France until she agreed

to reasonable terms. Pitt, as we have seen, desired to withdraw the army from the Netherlands, but was thwarted by George III. Resignation would now have been both dignified and salutary ; but he seems not even to have contemplated it. Probably his reasons for continuing in office were as follows. First, he scorned the thought of making an unfavourable peace and leaving the Jacobins supreme on the Continent. In principles and practice they differed little from the Robespierrists whom they had guillotined. They feared to make Terror " the order of the day," but only so (said Pitt) could they enforce their hideous rule. Their system, based avowedly on liberty and equality, was a monstrous sham and must collapse. Their finance was rotten, resting as it did on the compulsory acceptance of nearly worthless *assignats* at their face value.

Secondly, he feared the designs of English Jacobins, who sought to summon a General Convention for the purpose of overawing Parliament. To curb their agitation, he and his colleagues suspended the Habeas Corpus Act and carried repressive measures. The Government also sought, but in vain, to prove a connection between the democratic clubs and the enemy. A trumped-up charge of high treason against a shoemaker, Hardy, and his acquittal, rendered the Ministry highly unpopular. Nevertheless, Pitt struggled on with his coercive policy and made many arrests of agitators, charging them with seditious aims which could rarely be proved. Never did he

sink lower than during these reactionary efforts, which ended in failure. Thirdly, he carried Parliament with him, and defeated motions for peace by large majorities. To him the key of the whole situation was at Westminster; and he certainly underrated the magnificent vitality of the French people, the ability of their generals, the imbecility of the Allied commanders, and the vital drain of the West Indian expeditions. Fourthly, Grenville and he still cherished the pathetic belief that Catharine II would do something. In February 1795 she agreed to a treaty stipulating mutual help (to a very limited extent) in case of attack!

Consequently, Pitt resolved to test the real strength of "the new and monstrous systems of cruelty, anarchy, and impiety" embodied in the French Government. In reply to the peace motion of Wilberforce, he uttered these memorable words: "It has pleased inscrutable Providence that this power of France should triumph over everything that has been opposed to it, but let us not therefore fall without making any efforts to resist it! Let us not sink without measuring its strength!" In this half-despairing spirit Pitt struggled on, only to meet with slack support from Austria, next to none from Russia, and betrayal by Prussia and Spain. Prussia made peace with France in April, and Spain in July. Acting more or less under compulsion, the Dutch Republic (now "Patriot") made war on Great Britain. Late in the spring the British army began to be withdrawn

from Hanover, except 3000 horse, which George III ordered to remain so as to help his Hanoverian troops defend that Electorate. On this last topic Cornwallis wrote: "It may not be easy to make [the King] hear cool and dispassionate reason, but still Ministers must do their duty." The rest of the troops were sent finally either to the West Indies, to effect the reduction of Cape Town (September), or to reinforce the garrisons especially in Corsica.

Of these enterprises the West Indian now exacted the most deadly toll in lives and money. Recently Pitt had claimed that the gains outweighed the losses in that quarter. The reverse was the case in and after 1795. Our difficulties there were intensified by the frantic efforts of the French to stir up the negroes to revolt (which accounts for Dundas's reluctance to raise black regiments), also by the terrible hurricane of November 1795, which destroyed or scattered a great expedition sent thither from Portsmouth. The wastage of life in the West Indies was also due largely to the absurd clinging to British uniforms, rations, and midday drills. Nevertheless, it is now abundantly clear from the *Spencer Papers* and other sources, that England could not abandon those valuable colonies to the troops and emissaries which France sent out, still less to the Jacobinised negroes, who turned part of Hayti into a hell. Moreover, all was not loss in that quarter. In the opinion of that age, the capture of Tobago, Martinique, St Lucia, and (later) Demerara and Trinidad, fully compensated

for the loss of life entailed. Retirement from Hayti in 1798 was wise in face of yellow fever and Spanish and French opposition; but the preservation of the other islands was imperative. To give up the West Indies was to give up sugar and rum.

One of the minor failures of the war occurred at the Quiberon Peninsula (July 1795). The plan of occupying that commanding position would have had a better chance but for the delays imposed by George III on the evacuation of Hanover. Finally, it was decided, largely owing to pressure by Windham, to use French *émigrés* and volunteers from among the prisoners of war in order to revive the Royalist cause in Brittany and Poitou. The proposal had some merits. A landing force of Frenchmen would be likely to receive a warmer welcome than a mixed force. It was also hoped that the Comte d'Artois (the future Charles X) would land, but he did not. A far worse disappointment was the inactivity of the Bretons. Owing to harvest work and mutual distrust, they would not rise in force. Thanks to the British fleet, the *émigrés* landed without opposition and easily captured the fort dominating the isthmus. Its boats also protected them after a sharp reverse beyond the isthmus. But the quarrels of their leaders, Hervilly and Puisaye, compromised everything. The treachery of a few self-styled Royalists betrayed the fort, whereupon the whole force of *émigrés* fled in panic towards the southern tip of the peninsula. Near it they received effective help from the broadsides of two British

sloops, and with resolution they might have held their ground, but many unaccountably surrendered. Nearly all were subsequently shot by the victors in pursuance of orders from Paris. It is now known that 2206 Royalists were rescued by the British ships.

The British part of the expedition was efficiently carried out right up to the final panic of the *émigrés*; and there is nothing to warrant the slanderous assertion of Sheridan that "British honour bled at every pore." Of course his *mot* was welcomed and improved on in Paris. Indeed, Romilly during his stay there in 1802 found the current explanation of Quiberon to be that Pitt had designedly sent to their graves the best of the French naval officers who happened then to be *émigrés* in England; and he was even commended for his astuteness! This version was also popular among their remaining kinsfolk in England. In reality, the evidence, when duly weighed, shows that the disaster was due, first, to non-co-operation by the Breton chiefs; secondly, to the schisms and quarrels among the *émigrés*; thirdly, to the treachery of certain so-called Royalists whom Hervilly had heedlessly enrolled from among the French prisoners recently taken.

A Coalition war becomes almost inevitably an affair of experiments, viz. to find out where the Allies can act with most effect against the enemy. It is easy afterwards for critics to point out which was the best point. To discover it at the time is a different matter. Pitt had now tried co-operation with the Central

Powers in the Flemish campaign, and with our southern Allies in Provence and the Riviera, also occasional diversions in favour of the Royalists in north-west France, together with the steady pressure of sea power both on France and her colonies. In the last sphere alone had success been attained, and chiefly because we acted alone and without regard to Allies. In the spring and summer of 1795 moderate successes were gained at sea by Hotham off Provence and Alexander Hood (Lord Bridport) off Brittany. Moreover, the hostilities with the Dutch laid open their colonies to attacks, which were almost invariably successful. Thus, in and after the autumn of 1795 the war became increasingly a maritime and colonial struggle of the traditional type ; and peace could soon have been procured if Pitt and Grenville had consented to abandon their Allies.

CHAPTER IX

EFFORTS FOR PEACE (1795–1797)

"We are at war with a system, which, by its essence, is inimical to all other governments, and which makes peace or war, as peace and war may best contribute to their subversion. It is with an *armed doctrine* that we are at war." In these glowing words Burke set forth the ultra-Royalist creed which demanded war *à outrance*. Horrified at the excesses of the Jacobins, and imbued with a deep sense of the majesty of the established order, he believed that it must exterminate them or be exterminated. To this belief he was trending in 1790 when he wrote his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. It had become a passionate conviction in the autumn of 1796, when he penned the above quoted statement—the kernel of his *Letters on a Regicide Peace*. Their burden is the folly and wickedness of compromising with that accursed thing, Jacobinism.

Here Pitt and he joined issue. The statesman underrated the power of French doctrines, or rather, he looked on them as harmless against the healthy organism of the British Constitution. Subversive they might be in Germany or Italy, but not here.

For him, also, the war had never been a clash of creeds; it was primarily a collision of interests. He reluctantly accepted war with France, not because she was a levelling Republic, but because she set at naught treaty rights, and sought to gain control over our Dutch Ally. With his usual practical bent, he summed up his war aim in the word "security."

For Burke the aim was monarchy. He was so wrapt up in contemplation of "the great mysterious incorporation of the human race," as not to discern the rottenness of the continental monarchies. Pitt had little time for contemplation of any kind, but he soon discovered the utter hollowness of the Royalist league, and, as one ruler after another faltered or ratted, Burke's glorious vision appeared as a death-dealing mirage. To the practical statesman the logical outcome of the Royalist creed, a war of extermination, was a madman's recipe. Surely, the stricken world could find salvation only in some compromise between the old and the new.

Moreover, the subtle alchemy of Nature, which relieves both the old from fixity and the new from chaos, was now operating with singular potency. The year 1795 witnessed the final spoliation of Poland by the three neighbouring monarchies, and the revival of settled government in France under the control of the Directory. In the East law and tradition were now trampled down by their avowed champions; in the West law and order were again asserting them-

selves. The French elections of the early autumn brought to power a more moderate party which quelled its opponents. Extreme democracy went out of fashion, as appeared in several details of the new Constitution. True, France now formally demanded the Rhine, Alps, Pyrenees, and Ocean as her " natural frontiers," but there seemed some chance that she might come to terms with the established order outside. Such at least was the hope of Pitt.

The state of affairs in these islands also imposed caution. The war, never popular, was now hated as the cause of dear bread and unemployment. Hardy's Corresponding Society therefore throve amazingly and held a monster meeting in Copenhagen Fields. A little later, on 29th October, a huge mob hissed the King as he proceeded to open Parliament. Shouts of " No Pitt! No war! Bread! Peace! " filled the air, and a stone or bullet (probably the former) shattered the glass of the royal coach. That missile cost England dear. It drove Ministers to further repressive measures, which were as futile as the outrage that prompted them. In foreign matters, however, Pitt held on his way. In the King's Speech on that very day, George read out (with much reluctance) an invitation to France as to a possible accommodation. In the debate Pitt justified his change of front on the ground that the new Government at Paris really represented the French people, and therefore offered some security for its engage-

ments. Grenville did not oppose Pitt, but he, like the King, distrusted any such overture as discouraging to our Allies.

This new departure did not, however, involve betrayal of their interests; for Pitt proposed a joint Declaration by all of them on the subject and the eventual holding of a Peace Congress. His procedure was not helped on by Grey's motion on 15th February 1796 in favour of a direct offer to Paris of negotiations on the ground that Ministers were not deserving of confidence. To this Pitt strongly demurred: "If (said he) the House are of opinion that the business cannot be safely left in the hands of Ministers, the proper step would be to address His Majesty to remove them from their situation, and not to endeavour to interrupt the affairs of Government by calling on the House of Commons to interfere with the functions of executive authority." The House supported him by 189 votes to 30. As to the charges of insincerity often urged against him, they were convincingly refuted. In his speech of 10th May 1796, Pitt pointed out that a Congress offered the best possible means for attaining a just settlement. France, however, rejected the proposal, probably because she expected brilliant successes in Italy.

Unfortunately the British overture had worked mischief by arousing fears at Vienna and Turin of our forthcoming defection. Those Courts were on the worst of terms; and, as Pitt delayed sending pecuniary help, they were ill prepared for the terrific

blows showered on them by Bonaparte in April 1796. The British fleet, poorly handled by Hotham, could not, for all Nelson's efforts with a few light craft, hold up the French on the Riviera; and Italy was lost. The sequel fulfilled to the letter Nelson's prophecy in January: "Italy is the gold mine, and, if once entered, is without the means of resistance." Pitt showed far less foresight. He took comfort from the fact that in the last years France had spent on the war "one-third of its capital," and was now virtually bankrupt. That Bonaparte's maxim—"War must support war"—could be successfully carried out transcended his essentially insular experience.

Nevertheless Pitt strengthened his hold on the country. The general election of June 1796 sent up his majority unimpaired, and nearly half of the small band of Foxites came from pocket boroughs. Even during its progress Pitt wrote to Grenville expressing his hope of peace and his belief in a rumour that Austria would sue for terms, an act which would "simplify very much our plans." The rumour was false; but Pitt's words throw light on the problem, which centred in his resolve to procure for her the best terms possible. Without her, he added, we could struggle alone and successfully against France, Holland, probably Spain, and the Northern Powers. Here, on purely political ground, his forecast was sound. Spain was to declare war on us in October 1796; the Northern Powers, at the end of 1800.

As the horizon darkened with every month, the Cabinet, on 2nd September, agreed on the conditions of a general pacification, to be framed conjointly with Austria. In brief they were these: France to retain all her conquests of Rhenish lands except those belonging to the Hapsburgs, who must also recover their Belgic provinces. In order to facilitate peace, Great Britain would restore to the French all their colonies recently taken, likewise the Dutch colonies, except the Cape, Ceylon, and Cochin. Thus Pitt was prepared to conclude a peace no more satisfactory than that of Aix-la-Chapelle (1748), when our oversea conquests counterbalanced French victories on land and led to the *status quo ante*, *i.e.* the restitution of Belgium to Austria, of Louisburg, etc., to France. So, too, now our colonial gains, with the three exceptions above named, were to be sacrificed in order to re-establish Austria in Belgium. Elsewhere France was to retain her acquisitions, while, by a singularly mean device, the Dutch were to be heavily mulcted. It is not surprising that George III disliked these proposals; but he did not oppose them because "the refusal which most probably will ensue may arouse men's minds, and make them more ready to grant supplies of men and money." This practical consideration probably weighed with Grenville, who throughout all the negotiations doubted as to their success, except in securing unanimity at home.

Pitt was more hopeful. On 6th October, at the

first sitting of the new Parliament, he spoke with animation of the achievements of the British Navy as counterbalancing all the triumphs of Bonaparte. He lauded Austria's recent efforts in Swabia, which had driven back two French armies beyond the Rhine. Referring to his financial aid, which had made that success possible, he pointed to the buoyant revenue, the index of a commercial prosperity surpassing even that of the previously unexampled year 1792. Fresh efforts must be put forth in order to raise a special defence force (and 15,000 men were so raised). The thought which inspired his last classic utterance of 9th November 1805 at the Guildhall now appeared in less perfect form in his peroration : " England has never shown itself deficient in firmness and magnanimity ; it is unrivalled in resource ; it has always been foremost in the career of honourable exertion, and it has only to maintain its accustomed vigour and perseverance to effect the restoration of tranquillity upon terms consistent with the dignity of its own character and the security and interest of Europe."

Yet, within a month, Pitt and his colleagues were constrained to a step which British seamen felt to be a national humiliation—withdrawal from the Mediterranean. To leave that sea has always, since 1696, been a glaring confession of weakness. Why, then, resort to it? Various causes concurred. First, Bonaparte's brilliant successes in Italy had almost driven out the Austrians, had reduced our ally, Naples,

to peace, and imperilled our hold on Corsica. Further, in October Spain declared against us, and her fleets, co-operating with those at Rochefort and Brest, could strike either at Lisbon, Ireland, our southern coasts, or the West Indies. Deeming a concentration in the Atlantic imperative, the Government ordered Jervis to withdraw from the Mediterranean. During a few days, it reversed those instructions in the hope that Catharine would be tempted by the bait of Corsica to send a Russian fleet into those waters. But again she disappointed her Allies—by dying just at the time when she seemed about to do something.

The tidings of her death stiffened the necks of the French Directors. At once they refused to restore Belgium to Austria and made light of the French colonies which Pitt and Grenville offered to restore. Finally, on 19th December, they ordered our envoy, Malmesbury, to leave Paris within forty-eight hours. That his summary dismissal caused intense surprise at the Foreign Office appears from the letter which Canning dashed off to Malmesbury on Christmas Day : " You will find us all in consternation," so wrote the young Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, who had attached himself closely to Pitt. The phrase probably reflects the inmost thoughts of the Prime Minister, perhaps also of Grenville. There is little doubt of their sincerity in this negotiation, though Fox hotly asserted the contrary. The House approved of their conduct by 212 votes to 37 (30th December 1796).

So discouraged were the Foxites that nearly all of them "seceded" from Parliament—a dereliction of duty which illustrated once more the political tactlessness of their leader. If (as he wrote to Lord Holland) he really believed Pitt to be a rogue, it was his duty to stay at Westminster and expose him, instead of retiring to St Anne's Hill for classical studies. His letters form a striking contrast to those of Pitt: the former exhale cultured ease, the latter are dull from overwork. Which are the finer?

The first half of the year 1797 was not only the most critical period in our history, but also (as will duly appear) the gloomiest in the private life of Pitt. Apart from Jervis's brilliant victory on St Valentine's Day off Cape St Vincent over a Spanish fleet of more than twice his gun power, every event was a disaster. First, at the end of February, came the crash in the nation's finances (due to large exports of gold for Austria) which induced the Government to suspend cash payments by the Bank and issue a paper currency. Second, came the series of defeats of Austria by Bonaparte until she sued for a separate peace. Third, and by far the worst, came the mutinies of the Channel and Nore fleets (April–June). They resulted largely from the financial stringency, which led Ministers to refuse the first moderate demands of the seamen for better pay. Defiance of discipline breeds disorder, and the second mutiny at Spithead, closely followed by the more desperate outbreak at the Nore, led to appalling scenes which culminated in the almost

complete stoppage of the sea-borne trade of London. What wonder is it that, early in June, Consols sank to 48, the lowest point in our history?

Fortunately, the compensating factor, which is rarely absent from English history, soon began to operate in our favour. The violence of the Nore mutineers was their undoing. By 13th June the red flags came down from all the ships at the Nore; and the seditious madness which in part had prompted this last mutiny discredited the more violent of the Republican clubs ashore. Further, the national peril stilled the factious efforts of the Opposition, and for the time induced Sheridan to stand forth in defence of governmental action. As for Austria, we were well quit of her; and the financial stringency did not long check the productive powers of the nation. Even across the Channel the horizon was not wholly dark; for the trend of French politics seemed to be towards peace. The Moderates, then strong in the French Legislature, strongly opposed a war of conquest, which bred the lust for more conquests. Against that party Bonaparte and his soldiery bitterly inveighed; and, clearly, the issue depended largely on the supremacy of the civilian or the soldier in French politics.

In spite of our depression and the exaltation of France, Pitt in mid-June resolved to make another overture for peace. His decision formed an unconscious retort to the dying censure of Burke—"He cannot make peace, and he will not make war."

Certainly it contravened the accepted rules of the diplomatic game, which, unless a wholesale surrender is compulsory, reject all thought of bargaining from zero. This was the opinion of his Old Whig allies. Portland, Spencer, and Windham strongly supported Grenville in deprecating any such overture; and (apart from the help which it offered to the French Moderates) it forms one of the most questionable steps in Pitt's career. Yet he gained the support of Loughborough, Cornwallis, Chatham, Dundas, and, finally, of Liverpool. The tussle was severe. *Séance orageuse*, noted Windham in his Diary on 15th June. Pitt, however, carried the day, partly, no doubt, because the news had arrived of the collapse of the Nore Mutiny, but also owing to his indefinable but very definite ascendancy over his colleagues: "Great superiority of Pitt over Grenville" is a significant comment by Windham. The sharpness of the contest appears from a phrase in Grenville's letter to the King, declaring that he would resign if the times were not so highly critical. Finally, on the adoption of a slight change of method, he withdrew his opposition, though not his disapproval. Too loyal to intrigue for a failure, he went through with the negotiation, in the hope that the result would be to range the nation solidly behind the Government.

The motives actuating Pitt were of a higher order. In several letters to the Earl of Malmesbury he stated his reasons, the chief being his sense of duty as a Prime Minister and a Christian to stop the war, if it

were possible to do so on anything like reasonable terms. The statement, as by a flash, reveals his inmost mind. Outwardly he seemed a cold and egotistical Minister, intent on preserving British supremacy and class superiority. In reality he hated war as a stupid and utterly futile way of deciding disputes. Therefore, even in that dark summer of 1797, he forced peace proposals on his unwilling King and on doubtful or opposing colleagues, despatching Malmesbury to Lille early in July to open the negotiations. Owing, doubtless, to the divisions in the Cabinet, Pitt and Grenville kept to themselves the contents of the chief despatches. But it is clear that the two chiefs differed much in outlook, thus increasing Malmesbury's difficulties. No less awkward was the position of Canning. Diverging from his superior, he warmly espoused the views of Pitt.

At first, as was natural, all went well at Lille. The French Directors, after separating Austria and England, had Europe at their feet. Probably the greatest mistake in the diplomatic history of France was the failure to close at Lille with Pitt's extremely favourable offer. After much fencing it transpired that Great Britain would no longer insist on the restitution of Belgium to the Hapsburgs, and would restore to France and her Allies all our oversea conquests except the Cape and Trinidad. Pitt was prepared even to hand back the Dutch settlements in Ceylon (captured in 1795) rather than allow the negotiation to fail. At one point he was inexorable.

On no condition would he listen to the Spanish demand for Gibraltar.

On the whole, then, our 1797 terms were worse than those of 1796 to the extent of Belgium, Cochin, and probably Ceylon. But the retention of the Cape and Trinidad bespeaks Pitt's resolve to uphold British supremacy in the East and West Indies. On the other hand, the Flemish Barrier and Belgium were sacrificed; and France was to keep all her continental conquests and recover all her colonies, the losses falling only on her Allies. Is it surprising that most of Pitt's colleagues resisted these wholesale surrenders, which left the French in a far stronger position than in 1793? Pitt then accepted war rather than tolerate their supremacy over Holland. Now he made no demur about the Belgic lands, and left France in control of Amsterdam, Cologne, Mainz, Milan, and Bologna. This was to retire from the Continent, and to sacrifice nearly all the results of five years of successful naval war. George III had foretold that a peace offer would raise the spirits of "that horrid nation"; and his canny pessimism was more correct than the viewy hopefulness of Pitt; for the Jacobins now counted on wearing out England, revolutionising Ireland, and crushing Austria. In the Venetian plain Bonaparte was successfully bullying the Hapsburg envoy and laying his plans for Oriental conquests. He and his troops inveighed against the pacifist Moderates of Paris as Royalists in disguise, and, after skilfully preparing the ground, he sent to Paris a blustering

Jacobin, General Augereau, to plot their overthrow. The result was the *coup d'état* of 18 Fructidor (4th September), in which the Chambers were coerced and a Jacobinical Dictatorship established. The leaders of the Moderates were exiled, elections were reversed, liberty of the Press ceased, and France underwent a dull parody of the Reign of Terror.

At once the victors raised their terms at Lille. They now required from Great Britain *at least* the surrender of all her conquests, including the Cape and Trinidad, and would not disclose their own terms. Further humiliations being evidently held in store, Malmesbury broke off the negotiation, and left Lille on 17th September. At Calais on the morrow he wrote to Pitt expressing deep regret at this hard necessity; for "we infallibly should have succeeded had not the political earthquake of 4th September taken place." We now know that the scene-shifter was Bonaparte. He soon succeeded in imposing on Austria the disastrous Treaty of Campo Formio (17th October), which assured to France the Rhine boundary, complete supremacy in North and Central Italy, and the possession of the Ionian Isles. But, six days earlier, her projects for the invasion of England or Ireland were shattered by Duncan's great victory over an equal force of the Dutch off Camperdown. Gained by crews that of late were mutinous, that triumph raised England's prestige incalculably, and restored her striking power in distant waters.

Camperdown also emphasised the recovery of

national energy. The rejection of favourable offers by the enemy always produces such a rebound; and the Directory played into the hands of Grenville by insisting on impossible terms. Militarised Jacobinism (parent of Bonapartism) being now rampant in France, her sympathisers in England drooped their heads. Thus the outcome signally refuted the dying prophecies of Burke and the less excusable croakings of Windham, to the effect that Pitt's negotiations with France were disgraceful to him and unnerving to the country: "We shall go on and on in this tiding system (so Windham wrote to Pitt on 10th October) till at last we shall be utterly aground and lie without resistance at the mercy of the enemy." Far from that, both Pitt and the nation now braced themselves for a fight to a finish. At the opening of the autumn session Tierney (now the only fighter among the Foxites) dilated on Pitt's wickedness, on the insincerity of his peace proposals, and on the apathy of Parliament and people. But these carpings stung Wilberforce to unwonted action. Hitherto an opponent of the war, he now leaped to his feet, and, protesting against all thought of surrender, urged all members "to unite zealously and firmly to save the country from the destructive hatred and inordinate ambition of the enemy." The speech sounded the new note of defiance, which soon was echoed by all Britons.

From the ultra-Royalist wing Pitt was attacked by Earl Temple, who, seeking to don the Elijah's mantle

of Burke, reprobated any overtures to our mortal enemy and hailed with delight their breakdown. In reply the Minister defended his offer of peace, and, while deploring its failure, proved that the responsibility lay with the men who had been bayoneted into power at Paris. Against a Whig critic, Sir John Sinclair, he further argued that the overture was prompted by a belief in the pacific trend of public opinion in France during the summer. It had failed, but its failure had revealed the subversive aims of the French Directory. He therefore besought the House unanimously to show its resolve "to stand or fall by the laws, liberties, and religion of our country." The appeal struck home. Sinclair withdrew his amendment, and the address to the King was carried without a dissentient voice—an event unparalleled in that age of bitter partisanship.

The *coup d'état* of Fructidor divides the wars of the French Revolution into two parts. In the earlier part France struggles hard and successfully to repel her invaders and gain "the natural frontiers" which she deems necessary to her security. After Fructidor her policy and her campaigns become avowedly aggressive. Democracy, nominally in power at Paris, undergoes the deterioration consequent on the conquest of free neighbours like the Swiss and the rise of Bonaparte. English democrats feel the change. After the stultification of French democracy the young poets, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey, shed their Jacobinical enthusiasms. The nation rallies to King

and Constitution; for, with all their defects, they are the guarantees of stability and order. In fine, the least obvious of the results of Fructidor is also the greatest—that Britons, almost as one man, thenceforth support Pitt in what has become a national struggle.

CHAPTER X

THE NATIONAL RALLY (1798–1800)

EARLY in the year 1798 despair drove the Swiss publicist, Mallet du Pan, to leave his country, then offering but a half-hearted resistance to the French invaders. He resolved (so he phrased it) "to leave the Continent in order to be able to speak to it." Travelling *via* Brunswick and Cuxhaven, he reached London in May, and was astounded at what he saw. Behind him he left a nominal peace, fruitful only in divisions, helplessness, anguish, and shame. Here he found a state of war, crushing taxes, and an invasion scare, but (he wrote)—

"safety, abundance, energy prevail everywhere, in the cottage as in the palace. I have seen no sign of timid apprehension. The state of public opinion has far surpassed my expectation. The nation had not yet come to understand its power and the vastness of its resources. The Government has inculcated the secret of this, and has imbued the people with limitless confidence. . . . It is difficult to imagine more ability and energy than that which the Ministry exhibits for all that concerns the safety of the State. A million of men are to-day armed. . . . Commercial affairs being very prosperous, too little attention is paid to the fate of the Continent. . . . The national impetuosity recognises neither obstacles nor limitations of fact."

These comments exhale the ecstasies of an escaped Continental; they do not reflect bare fact. England was not unanimous, impetuous, wealthy, or well armed. For the time Pitt was unpopular, owing to the new taxes, which strained the loyalty of his followers. As to the million of armed men, Pitt estimated the number of infantry volunteers at 40,000. And to how many Englishmen would it occur to ascribe their general well-being to the Government? Nevertheless, Mallet's *Memoirs* show why the mass of Britons doggedly supported Pitt, repudiated French democracy as an organised hypocrisy, and resolved to fight to the bitter end. They also put up with many severe restrictions on individual liberty in order, as they believed, to escape the curse of Jacobinism. Pitt's repressive measures had always had general approval, so even the Radical, Francis Place, admitted; and, in April 1798, when, under the threats of French invasion, Pitt proposed a Bill for the summary arrest of seditious persons, Sheridan's spirited plea for personal liberty won only 5 votes against 183. These numbers reflected the opinion of the country. On 22nd April Lord Auckland wrote as follows to Lord Mornington, Governor-General of India (soon to become the Marquis Wellesley) :—

"The general spirit and principles of the people are excellent. There certainly exist in London, Manchester, etc., clubs and secret societies affiliated as 'United English' on grounds of the wildest and bloodiest democracy. But they are few in number; . . . money abounds, though the Bank continues, wisely, to be precluded from paying

in cash, and bullion still flows in from the Continent under a rate of exchange rather more favourable than when you left us [November 1797]. . . . Great military prepara tions are making in every part of the country, and with alacrity and universal cheerfulness."

Our financial recovery in the winter of 1797–8 is one of the most surprising events in economic history. It resulted mainly from our maritime supremacy, the consequent growth of colonial trade (reflected in the increase of our merchant shipping by about one-fifth since 1793), and the great increase of mass production in the factories. To this last Pitt now contributed by freeing industry from unnecessary burdens, and by adjusting the fiscal loads to the backs best able to bear them.

In November–December 1797, after exhausting all ordinary means of taxation, he proposed to raise an extra sum of seven millions by nearly trebling the "Assessed Taxes," which were levied on houses, windows, servants, carriages, pleasure-horses, and objects of luxury. Incomes of less than £60 would escape the new imposts; but incomes of £200 and more would be assessed at one-tenth, or four times as much as heretofore. Admitting the new burdens to be heavy, he appealed to the wealthy to endure them in order to baffle the enemy and "to confirm the solidity of our power." Here, then, was a rather cumbrous form of graduated Income Tax, affecting about 800,000 householders and rising in the highest grades to two shillings in the pound. Tierney and

Sheridan sharply arraigned this new experiment, which for a time caused many defections from the ministerial ranks. Fox, seeing his chance, came forth from retirement sharply to arraign the Minister for ruining the country, first by the war, and now by a policy of plunder. "Venomous ranklings" (as Wilberforce noted) spread through Parliament and the City to the country at large. The wealthy foretold ruin; even the patient middle-classes growled; and Pitt, while proceeding in a state procession to St Paul's, was hooted. Nevertheless, on 4th January 1798, he carried his measure by 196 votes to 71, but only after making considerable remissions, which cost the revenue about £2,500,000. The new taxes, however, assumed a simpler and more definite form at the end of the year. By a large majority Pitt then carried his measure, which he declared would bring about as fair and equal a contribution as could be devised. Thus at last he created a system which, with later improvements, has enabled England to weather many a storm down to 1918.

In the last resort the yield of taxation depends on the honesty and good-will of the taxpayer, and it seemed for a time as though he would try to evade the new Assessed Taxes. But amidst the acrid debates on that subject, the Speaker, Addington, struck the right note by suggesting that the Bank of England be empowered to receive voluntary contributions towards the nation's needs. Pitt warmly approved the suggestion, and out of his comparative

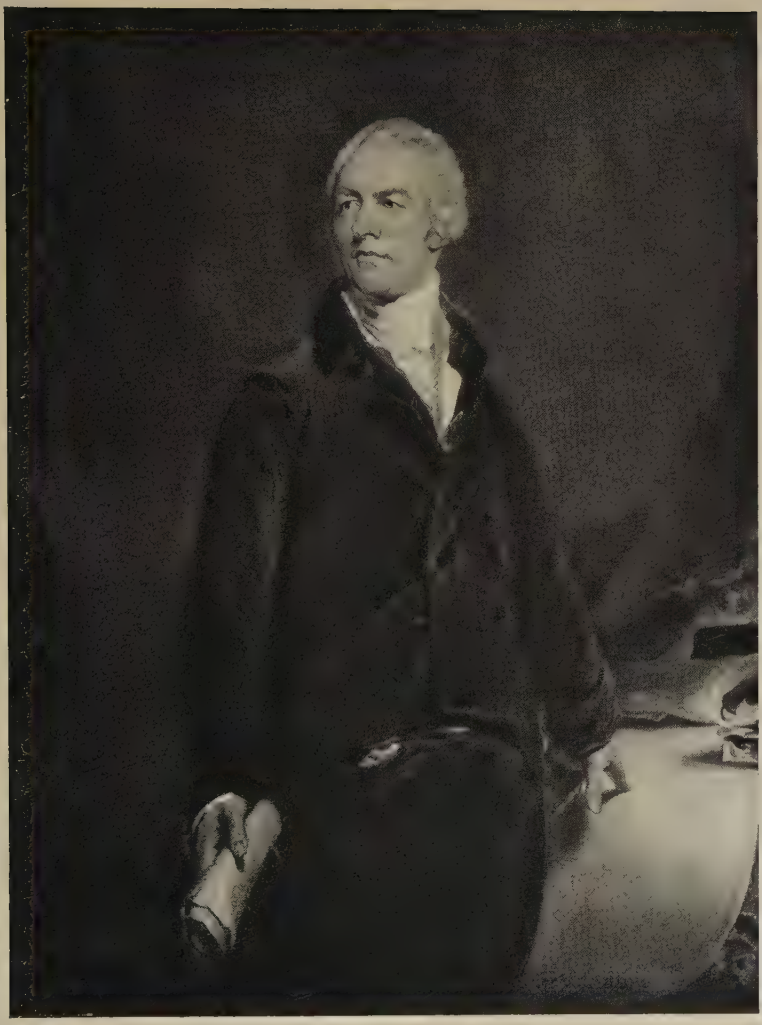
poverty subscribed £2000. So did other Ministers. The King offered £20,000 a year during the war. The Bank subscribed £200,000; and the City, repenting of its boorish reception of Pitt, sent in £10,000. Wilberforce contributed the eighth of his income; and some persons subscribed even one-fifth—that, too, when the State was sweeping off one-tenth. The total of this voluntary contribution amounted to £2,300,000. As Pitt proudly declared (25th April), it came from the gentry, the merchants, the artisans and labourers, furnishing striking proofs of the loyalty of all parts of the population. On the other hand, it also proved the needlessness of his repressive legislation, which in 1799 was completed by his Combination Acts against Trade Unions.

The imposition of an Income Tax marks the recovery of Pitt's ascendancy in the House. Fox again wooed the classics and left the burden of opposition to the erratic Sheridan, the persistent Tierney, and the ponderous Whitbread. Apart from the occasional Olympian flashes of Sheridan's wit, Pitt now encountered no formidable opposition. Never, indeed, did a statesman emerge more triumphantly from gloom and disaster to heights of trust and triumph. As Britain's Allies fell away from her they revealed her figure, strained indeed but sinewy with struggle, and no longer swerving aside at their demands. Now her task was simple, and Bonaparte by his invasion of Egypt gave her Navy the chance of the century. Thenceforth she held at sea the position which the

France of Carnot had held on land. Fortunately, too, the days of the Hothams and Bridports were over, and those of Jervis, Nelson, and Cornwallis had fully dawned. The value of a swift offensive was now appreciated at the Admiralty, which exacted due retribution for diffuse operations over uncommanded seas.

At Westminster also Pitt was now to reap the reward of faith and persistence. The years 1798–1800 mark the climax of his parliamentary career. Macaulay has ascribed his ascendancy in the House to a voice of silvery clearness, to the even flow of his stately periods, to his polished and splendid declamation, and to a union of oratorical powers which equalled those of Fox and eclipsed lesser rivals. The great essayist repeats the charges of pride and disdain which the Opposition handed on to his generation, only to be dispelled by a truer knowledge of the real Pitt. We now know the deep fund of kindness and sympathy with suffering which lay hidden under that cold and formal exterior. His efforts for peace in season and out of season proclaim him a good European; and only when they failed irretrievably in September 1797 did he brace himself for a fight to a finish. In the House as in the council chamber his supremacy was due, not to superb oratory, but to a transcendent character.

A hostile witness, Nichols, after praising the unfailing strength of his oratory, pronounced him deficient in foresight, resolution, and width of vision. As to



WILLIAM PITT

From an engraving by C. Turner, A.R.A., after Lawrence

irresolution, no sign of it appears in his duel with Tierney. That curious episode arose out of sharp tongue-fencing during the debates of May 1798 on a Bill for extending the operations of the press-gang to certain classes hitherto protected. Tierney's stout opposition elicited from Pitt the taunt that he was obstructing the work of national defence. Tierney hotly protested and called for an apology, which Pitt as stiffly refused. The peppery Irishman therefore sent a challenge; and they met with pistols in a dell of Putney Heath, twice exchanging shots at twelve paces, harmlessly. The latter discharge Pitt fired into the air. The affair brought him a dignified rebuke from the King, and Wilberforce talked of bringing in a Bill for preventing duelling, dropping it, however, on Pitt's representations. Probably the people at large liked the great Minister the better for this blazing indiscretion. Usually prim, brainy, and correct to a fault, he now had done a deed which any Tony Lumpkin could understand and admire.

It may not be amiss here to dwell for a short space on Pitt's private life. As we have seen, he subscribed £2000 to the voluntary contribution. He could ill afford that sum; for both his mother and elder brother made demands upon his purse. The burden of debt therefore lay heavily about him; and at one time the bailiffs were with difficulty kept from seizing his furniture in Downing Street. Was that on behalf of the hatter who in 1795 sent in an impossible bill for £600? The King, knowing his eternal difficulties,

had in 1793 very thoughtfully appointed him Warden of the Cinque Ports; but straightway he gave £1000 to start the Dover Volunteer Corps (one of the earliest); and he spent much on his official residence, Walmer Castle. The great problem for Tomline, Rose, and other friends was how to keep solvent a man so heedlessly generous and so careless about the supervision of tradesmen and domestics. There is little doubt that he was systematically plundered; for his household expenses at Downing Street were greater during his not infrequent absences.

To his virtual bankruptcy we may not unreasonably ascribe the enigmatical ending of his attachment to the Hon. Eleanor Eden (January 1797). Certain it is that the affair caused great pain both to him and to her, while her father, Lord Auckland, was deeply offended. This sore trial fell on Pitt a month before the Bank crisis of February; and a letter of those dark weeks depicts Pitt as looking unhealthily puffy and living a life of almost complete seclusion. Then came the mutinies, then the offer of peace to France, and its rejection. This last blow fell on him at a time of deep family affliction; for his brother-in-law, Edward Eliot, then died. The loss "almost overwhelmed him," so wrote Wilberforce, and he was unable even to see Malmesbury, the bearer of the dread news from Lille. "The robust Eliot" had been a dear friend from the time of their joyous holiday at Rheims; and Pitt felt his loss long and keenly. In October he heard of the final surrender

of Austria to France. These repeated shocks were met with a fortitude so quiet as to conceal the drain which they made on a naturally delicate constitution. All the more marvellous, then, was his recovery in the winter of 1797–8, based, as it would seem, on a spirited resolve to stake everything on the success of the new drastic taxation. Great must have been his faith in England; and the issue of the parliamentary struggle proved that her faith in him was equally great. That, at the end of it all, he should elect to fight Tierney is a pleasing declension from ministerial propriety. There is no better fighter than your converted pacifist.

These years witnessed some oscillations in the influence of Wilberforce over Pitt, and on the whole, some increase of that of Dundas. The braw laird was good at wine and stories; while Wilberforce abounded in good works and admonitions. Further, in the years 1794–5 he supported, or even moved, resolutions in favour of peace with an avowedly revolutionary Government. These Pitt strongly reprobated, and proportionately cooled towards his old friend. The estrangement soon passed away, partly because Pitt in October 1795 made the first of his three offers of peace. The question of the slaves also for a time somewhat strained their friendship. The Abolitionist was instant in season and out of season, while Dundas urged and carried a motion for postponement. Pitt, as we have seen, stood stiffly by Wilberforce in this matter, even in the crises of 1797, but privately

counselled delay. The result was a slight coolness between them. It passed away when Wilberforce judged Pitt's effort for peace in 1797 to be sincere and undeservedly unsuccessful. The testimony of so independent and conscientious a witness as Wilberforce ought to end all the tattle about Pitt's insincerity in the peace proposals.

Wilberforce's support of the Minister in his struggle for heavier taxation also counted for much. At such a turning-point the Christian idealist exerts an influence far transcending that of the vote-manipulator; and the nation felt reassured when it saw Pitt and Wilberforce reunited. But influences were at work in the Cabinet which the latter deplored. Privately he wrote of Pitt that he was "one of the most public-spirited and upright, and the most desirous of spending the nation's money economically, and of making sacrifices for the general good, of all the men I ever knew." But he also expressed a doubt as to his "resisting the improvidence and restraining the weakness of colleagues." The comment reveals one of Pitt's limitations, and still more the weakness of the governmental machine. Doubtless Pitt would have renovated it in time of peace. In time of war renovation spelt innovation, and innovation spelt revolution.

Politically and socially Pitt is a connecting link between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In matters fiscal he pointed the way to Cobden, but in regard to Reform and social subordination he belonged to the age of Chatham. The advocate of Free Trade

and author of the Income Tax, he nevertheless believed that the lower orders were meant for work, and approved the employment of children in factories. As he was spitefully reported by Michelet and others to have suggested this last expedient in a brutal way, it may be well to quote his words during the debate of 12th February 1796: "Experience had already shown how much could be done by the industry of children and the advantage of early employing them in such branches of manufacture as they can execute." Thus he merely approved an already established custom, then deemed natural by all weavers and spinners, which had not as yet bred the hideous wrongs of the post-war period. Yet it is undeniable that he had no sympathy with the grievances of the factory hands, and sought by his Combination Act (1799) to stamp out trade unions as a breach of the law of supply and demand. For, while intellectually half a democrat, Pitt was temperamentally wholly an aristocrat; and French revolutionary madness finally drove him to consort with reactionaries. At heart he believed in the old social order, shorn of its worst excrescences and propped by sound British oak.

Returning to the sphere of public affairs, we may note that it was Pitt and Grenville who, in April 1798, induced the very reluctant Admiralty to despatch a fleet once more into the Mediterranean. Their aim was to protect the Kingdom of Naples from Bonaparte's great armada at Toulon, and to encourage Austria once more to take up arms. As is well known,

the despatch of Nelson into that sea led to the brilliant triumph of the Nile, with its far-reaching results. The capture of most of the remaining French, Dutch, and Spanish colonies further assured our maritime and commercial supremacy. By the year 1799 the French Directory admitted that French merchantmen had vanished from the seas; but French products were carried fraudulently in neutral ships, a practice which was soon to embroil us with the League of the Armed Neutrals.

Pitt's efforts to form a Second Coalition against France bore fruit slowly. Friction between London and Vienna had always been acute, and it increased in November 1798, when the Hapsburgs believed us guilty of inciting Naples to attack France. For that rash act, due largely to Nelson, Downing Street was not responsible. Thus, the war of the Second Coalition against France opened clumsily; but, when Russia's forces joined those of Austria, their impact speedily swept the French out of Italy and Germany. With good sense and good faith the Allies should have driven her back within her ancient limits. The curse of the First Coalition having been a reckless orgy of national greed, Pitt now sought betimes to ensure accord. In November 1798 he sent to our future Allies a plan for the reconstruction of Europe, which clearly foreshadowed that of 1814, championed by his pupil, Castlereagh. In it he postulated the return of France to her ancient limits, which involved her surrender of the Netherlands, the Rhineland, Savoy,

and Nice. He figured Austria as the guardian of Italy, the German lands west of the Rhine as forming part of the Germanic System, and the Belgic Provinces as buttressing the Dutch Netherlands. In order to obtain the support of Prussia, she would be invited to state her expansive desires.

The programme has obvious limitations. It is dominated rather oppressively by the master-thought of piling up barriers against French aggression; and in the main he relies on mass and disregards mass mentality. This is, of course, merely to say that he lacks the prophetic vision to foresee the rise of the new pulverising force of Nationality. A graver fault is his *carte blanche* offer to Prussia, if she will but come in; but he sees her aid to be necessary for driving the French from the Low Countries, and designs the Anglo-Russian expedition to the Helder in October 1799 in the confident belief that she will co-operate. Had she done so in the midst of that year of triumph, 1799, the work of 1814 might have been anticipated by fifteen years.

The military failure at the Helder was ascribed by Sheridan to Pitt's credulity as to the strength of the Orange party in Holland. But he overestimated their activity, not their numbers. Further, the *Spencer Papers* now prove that that objective was chosen by General Abercromby and Admiral Mitchell, not by Ministers. The plan was a good one, but delays postponed its execution until the early autumn gales set in. Another fault was the late arrival of the

Russian force. Yet the effort was not fruitless. It secured thirteen Dutch warships, and, by diverting large French forces from other quarters, helped our Allies. Yet Sheridan's criticism of Pitt had some foundation. The Minister was too apt to believe that other statesmen were animated by his own high sense of duty in the common cause. An essentially insular statesman is not likely to gauge the shiftiness of Continental Chanceries; and it is significant that England did far better in 1801, when she was rid of her Allies, than in 1799–1800, when she was waiting for their co-operation. In no war of modern times has bad faith or slackness so quickly blighted a promising beginning.

Pitt strove hard to avert the disruption of the Coalition. Promptly he repelled the offer of peace made by Bonaparte, as First Consul, on Christmas Day 1799, to the monarchs of Great Britain and Austria, because he saw in it no prospect of security, but rather a device for separating the Allies. He also conjectured (so he wrote to Cornwallis) that a declaration in favour of a Bourbon Restoration would advance both their cause and the chances of a durable peace. The answer was couched in very stiff terms; and, nerved with this singular hope, Pitt fired off one of his most pugnacious speeches (3rd February 1800). Reviewing the origin and the course of the war, he branded the conduct of the French Republic as persistently aggressive, the actions of Bonaparte in Italy and Egypt as cruelly unscrupulous, and his recent

usurpation of power at Paris as more odious, and probably no more durable, than any of the previous changes. While not closing the door to all negotiations with "this last adventurer in the lottery of revolutions," he rejected the present deceptive offer, preferring to trust to a Bourbon Restoration.

Such was the drift of his speech, remarkable for intensity of feeling against Bonaparte. Pitt carried the day by 265 votes to 64; but, contrary to his expectations, his animosity against the First Consul and defence of the Bourbons helped powerfully to establish him and damn them. Historically correct, the speech was inexpedient politically, except in so far as it reassured the Austrian Court; and events soon proved the unwisdom of inspiriting a certain enemy in order to reassure an uncertain Ally.

From the *Spencer Papers* it is clear that Pitt often had a share in the direction of naval operations, and his letters on that topic refute the charge of ignorant presumption. The choice of objectives on the Dutch, French, and Spanish coasts in 1799–1800 presented extraordinary difficulties, and, frequent as were the failures of our circumferential strategy, it was far better than a tame defensive. Its effect in wearing down the enemy's resources was considerable; and even the worst year, 1800, witnessed two important acquisitions, namely Curaçoa and Valetta. Nearer home success became more and more difficult; for the panoply of the combatants was so complete that no blow went home. The chances were curiously

even. Over against our naval and colonial supremacy might be set the defection of the Czar Paul, his formation of the Armed Neutrality League, and Bonaparte's brilliant military and diplomatic successes. As the strain told upon the strength of the two peoples, they consolidated alike their finances, their fighting forces, and their administrations. Nominally a Republic, France had now become a centralised despotism. The counterpart here was the Act of Union with Ireland.

CHAPTER XI

THE UNION

A GREAT statesman, like a great soldier, never accepts a defeat as final. "Baffled, to fight better," he examines the causes of failure and sometimes wins success by merging a partial effort in a larger. So was it with Pitt. Beaten in 1785 when he strove for closer commercial relations with Ireland, he now, in 1799, framed a scheme of complete union. During the long and hopeless broils of Irish politics that solution appeared to him the only cure for the evils consequent on domination by a comparatively small Protestant minority. After the triumph of the principles of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity in France, past were the days when the Dublin Parliament, representing little more than the Anglican gentry, could hold down the Catholic majority and the Presbyterians of Ulster. Pitt saw the improbability of local reform and the impossibility of resisting all reform. In November 1792 he wrote to the Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Westmorland: "The idea of the present fermentation bringing both parties to think of an union with this country has long been in my mind. I hardly dare flatter myself with the hope of its taking place, but I believe it, though itself

not easy to be accomplished, to be the only solution for other and greater difficulties. The admission of Catholics to the suffrage could not then be dangerous." The last statement is highly significant as showing that even then Catholic Emancipation formed a part of his Union policy ; and Westmorland shared this view.

The rupture with France enhanced the difficulties by exciting among Irish Catholics and Presbyterians wild hopes of succour even from the atheistical Jacobins with whom they had nothing in common except hatred of England. The ferment increased year by year, so that Grattan and others proposed to introduce at Dublin a Bill for the removal of religious disabilities. All hope of passing such a measure was nipped by the indiscreet action of the new Lord Lieutenant, Earl Fitzwilliam, whom Pitt appointed at the end of 1794, and had to recall not long after. Having dealt fully with this unhappy episode in my *Pitt and Napoleon : Essays and Letters*, I pass it over here, merely noting that it left behind an impression (mistaken, I believe) as to Pitt's shiftiness in this matter. It also embittered the racial and religious hatreds in that island, the final outcome of which was the Irish Rebellion of May–June 1798. The slander that Pitt and his colleagues intrigued to bring about that rising in order to provide further arguments for the Union is not even specious. If such were their motives, they would have given free rein to the excesses of the ultra-Protestant minority at the time of its triumph.

Far from doing so, Pitt nominated that level-headed administrator, the Marquis Cornwallis, as Viceroy in place of the more rigorous Lord Camden. From the outset Cornwallis sought to prevent the triumphant faction from pursuing "measures that could only terminate in the extirpation of the greater number of the inhabitants and in the utter destruction of the country"; and he warmly reprobated the attempt to represent the rising as a religious struggle, maintaining that it was due, not to Catholicism, but to Jacobinism. There is no sign in his letters that he was sent to Ireland to press on the Union. That cure of her ills seems to have occurred to him about 12th August, during the examination of the ring-leaders, which (he wrote) "must clearly convince every man of common sense that, unless *a great measure* is adopted, the connection between Great Britain and Ireland must soon be at an end." A month earlier he had issued a proclamation offering to all who would lay down their arms certificates of pardon, which were soon known as "Cornys." This does not look like a policy of driving Ireland to desperation in order to force on a Union.

British statesmanship having moderated the excesses of the Protestant minority, it was clear that only by the same influence could an essentially unsound situation be set right. Accordingly, the King's Speech of 23rd January 1799 recommended a Union of the two Parliaments as "essential for their common security, and to augment and consolidate the strength,

power, and resources of the British Empire." To Sheridan's plea that that Parliament, elected in 1796, was not competent to legislate on the subject, Pitt demurred as tending to abrogate its authority. He also reminded the House that the Opposition had often complained either of the injustice, cruelty, or weakness of the Irish Government. There was, he continued, no way of ending these defects except through the action of a united Parliament, which, in freedom from local prejudices, would consult the larger interests of both countries. Admitting that England had often been to blame for her Irish policy, especially in commercial affairs, he pointed out that all such wrongs would disappear with Union. On the subject of annulling the disabilities of Irish Roman Catholics he spoke guardedly, but hopefully, suggesting that what could not be safely debated in the prejudiced body at Dublin might be wisely solved in a united Legislature. Above all, he rebutted the notion that Union meant subjection. "Is it not (he said) rather the free and voluntary association of two great countries, which join for their common benefit in one Empire, where each will retain its proportional weight and importance, under the security of equal laws, reciprocal affection, and inseparable interests, and which want nothing but that indissoluble connection to render both invincible?" The House supported Pitt by 140 votes to 15. So lukewarm a friend as Auckland wrote: "If the Union were well carried I really believe that

it would be the happiest and most important event that the British Empire has ever known."

But now all the separatist forces came into play. The mere fact that Westminster wished for a union rendered that proposal the more suspect at Dublin. That Parliament may have been, as Lecky claims, loyal to the British connection; but its loyalty depended on an unfailing supply of British troops and money with almost complete local option as to the use of them. The plan of union ought to have won support from all but the extreme Irish Nationalists. Thrice in the year 1798 had the French Directory used the Irish malcontents as catspaws by sending over belated driblets of troops just sufficient to keep the ferment alive, while its best general and army went to Egypt. Tricked by the French and terrorised by the Orangemen, non-privileged Irishmen should have seen in the Union the only source of hope; but their eyes were too blinded by suffering and hatred to see clearly. Here was the crux of the problem. The opposition of the Dublin Parliament, the Dublin Bar, and the Dublin shopkeepers was trivial when compared with that of the Irishry.

One question vitally affecting their welfare was raised, but not settled, by mid-November 1798. Cornwallis then had from Pitt a promise not to include in the Act of Union any clause which would preclude the discussion of Catholic Emancipation, and that promise, when made known to certain of the Irish leaders, led them to consider the measure favourably.

"They consider (writes Cornwallis) any change better than the present system." Pitt did not absolutely bind himself (as Cornwallis desired) to include Emancipation in the plan of Union; but he seems to have gone very far in this direction; for on 23rd September 1798, after seeing an outlined plan, Hawkesbury wrote to Mornington that it was intended "to give the Catholics (if possible) the little that remains to be given them." The words "if possible" of course refer to the opposition expected from the King. During the Fitzwilliam dispute George had declared Catholic Emancipation to be a topic far above the competence of any Cabinet, as it was bound up with the Coronation Oath.

Confronted with the Scylla of the royal conscience and the Charybdis of unending Irish disaffection, Pitt resolved to risk offending the former; but for the present he held back his hand; and his diplomatic reserve averted an immediate constitutional crisis. The crying need of the moment was to pacify Ireland; and Pitt's first speech on the Union tended to allay the storm of passion which that proposal had aroused in Dublin. His protagonist in Ireland was a young statesman who there on a small arena displayed the sound judgment, untiring assiduity, and quenchless courage which contributed largely to the fall of Napoleon. Robert, Viscount Castlereagh, afterwards second Marquis of Londonderry, combined in an eminent degree courage with skill, firmness with tact. He excelled rather in the Cabinet than in the House;

for his judgment was rarely at fault, his tongue often. His sentences were apt to ramble and his metaphors to bifurcate ; but what he lacked in brilliance he more than made up by a certain massive simplicity. Endowed neither with the eloquence, the wit, nor the charm of his fellow-countryman, Canning, he surpassed him in the essentials, consistency and trustworthiness. Temperamentally and often politically opposed, they yet were at one in their lifelong devotion to Pitt, whose detractors may be challenged to explain the riddle of the influence which he exerted upon natures so diverse. If to found a school of statesmanship is the most enduring work of a statesman, then in this respect is Chatham surpassed by his son—the inspirer of Castlereagh, who cemented the union of Europe in 1814, and of Canning, who carried Catholic Emancipation thirteen years later.

With Pitt's warm approval, Castlereagh became Secretary for Ireland late in 1798. Thenceforth he displayed equal staunchness in restoring order in Ireland and in defending the Union against the bitter declamations of Grattan and Sir John Parnell. By degrees the opposition slackened, and on 18th February 1800 he carried the motion for a Union by a majority of 161 to 115 in the Irish House of Commons. In my *Life of Pitt* I have examined the charges of wholesale corruption brought against Pitt in carrying the Union measure through the Dublin Parliament, and need only point out here that, if money and titles were the only means of securing that great majority,

then certainly Pitt and Castlereagh deserve sharp censure for the wasteful excess of their bribery. There has been much loose talk about wholesale corruption ; but few, if any, proofs have been advanced. Cornwallis advised that sixteen supporters should be raised to the Irish peerage. In reply Portland stated that among the new creations should be five or six who had resisted the measure, and he demurred to the extent of Cornwallis's demands in other respects. Perhaps the worst of the " deals " were those relating to Church patronage, which brought in some corrupt clergy. Yet it is probable that the bribery did not exceed that which was needful to secure the passing of any contentious Bill through the Irish Parliament, where largesse was always liberal. Apart from Dublin, Ireland did not now actively oppose the Union. Lecky sums up—" There were absolutely none of the signs which are invariably found when a nation struggles passionately against what it deems an impending tyranny."

Equally operative, also, was dread of the triumph of " French principles." At present the Irish Executive was so wretchedly weak as to invite defeat in case of a French invasion in force. Scarcely able of itself to hold down the rebellious majority in August 1798, when but 1100 French landed, how could it survive if the great Franco-Spanish fleet, assembled at Brest, managed to evade the smaller British blockading force and make the Irish coast ? That peril lasted from August 1799 into the year 1801,

causing ceaseless ferment among the " croppies " and dread among the propertied classes. Consequently, any measure like the Union, which promised to strengthen the Executive at Dublin, was certain to receive support from the latter. Canvassers for the Union made no converts from the poor, but very many from the well-to-do. The feeling prevailed that it was better for Dublin barristers to lose half their incomes, than for the gentry and professional classes to lose their all in a Jacobinical Revolution.

Pitt stressed this side of the question during the decisive debate of 21st April 1800 at Westminster. The object of the Union (he said) was " effectually to counteract the restless machinations of an inveterate enemy, who has uniformly and anxiously endeavoured to effect a separation." But he also pointed out the advantages which Ireland would reap from that measure, especially in regard to commerce. While holding to the ideal of Free Trade between the two islands, he accepted the protective duties of not more than ten per cent., for which the Irish Parliament contended ; and he added these remarkable words : " The manufacturers of this country do not, I believe, wish for any protective duties ; all they desire is a free intercourse with all the world ; and though the want of protecting duties may occasion partial loss, they think that amply compensated by general advantage."

This is the most definite of Pitt's pronouncements in favour of Free Trade ; and it should be remembered

that, though circumstances thwarted his efforts in that cause, yet he did much to further it, first between England and France, and now between Great Britain and Ireland. This speech on the Union is also remarkable for its generous tone towards the people whom he has often been accused of enslaving. Having regard to the rapid growth of prosperity in Great Britain, he urged the House, in apportioning the public burdens, to allow to the poorer island the greater share of advantage. Accordingly, two-seventeenths only of the imperial taxation fell to Ireland. Money was also granted to Irish manufacturers who declared that the Union would ruin them. Grey having moved an amendment for the consultation of the wishes of the Irish people, Pitt pointed out the danger of summoning primary assemblies in that land, and urged the House to endorse the vote of the Dublin Parliament. It did so by 236 votes to 30.

The Union, as conceived by Pitt, assured primarily the consolidation of the national power. Thus, it is the counterpart in our history to the then general tendency towards a more closely knit polity. In the United States, France, Italy, Switzerland, and Germany that process was very marked; and, except in the first case, was attended with more or less of compulsion or violence. Yet the results have generally been regarded as an advance on the old provincialism; and it is hard to see why Pitt's effort should be singled out for vehement abuse.

In his programme Catholic Emancipation held an

important place, though for tactical reasons he had to keep it in the background. The extent of his engagements to Irish Catholics has been hotly debated; and even Castlereagh's testimony does not clear up the matter. Late in 1799 he went to Westminster to consult the Cabinet, and found it favourable to Catholic Emancipation, though apprehensive of grave difficulties *from the highest quarter*. Nevertheless, Pitt advised that Cornwallis should "call forth Catholic support in whatever degree he found it practicable to attain it"; but "it was not thought expedient at that time to give any direct assurance to the Catholics." During the debate of 25th March 1801 Pitt stated that he never had given any definite pledge to them, and that they themselves knew it. His view was that Catholic Emancipation could far more readily be conceded after the Union than before it, and he considered it "desirable, advisable, important." On 13th May 1805 he re-affirmed these statements.

Now, it is very unlikely that so prudent a man as Cornwallis would definitely have pledged the Pitt Cabinet to introduce Catholic Emancipation; but he induced many of the Irish Catholics to believe that such a measure would be forthcoming after the Union, thereby winning them over to the Union cause. Therefore there was no civil war, and the Act of Union passed the Dublin Parliament, thereafter receiving the support of some of those who had opposed it. The fulfilment of the promises was now an affair of

honour, resembling "the gentleman's agreement" of unusually scrupulous diplomats. But in this case Pitt could not fail to exasperate either the King or the Catholics. He therefore walked warily, so that his programme and his procedure are alike unknown. In the King's Speech to the United Parliament which met in January 1801, Pitt inserted a reference to the extension of the benefits already secured by the Act of Union. Probably more could not be officially promised; for of his colleagues the Lord Chancellor (Loughborough), the Duke of Portland, and Lords Chatham, Westmorland and Liverpool, now opposed Catholic Emancipation. The first named is credited with having divulged to the King the preparation of the measure, but, if so, his "betrayal" can have made little or no difference; for in the eyes of George the question was one of conscience, in which domain all compromise was anathema.

Lecky and others contend that some compromise about the oath was feasible, and that George must have accepted it as he accepted other disagreeables. The contention ignores the distinction which George drew between politics and religion. Doubtless his anger was increased by the manner in which Loughborough revealed the purport of the measure before it was fully prepared; and his outbursts at the levee of 28th January reveal the fierceness of his resentment. But to suppose that he would have given way before a duly staged presentation is to ignore the granitic quality of his Protestantism. Pitt, however,

admitted to George Rose his mistake in not having earlier endeavoured to reconcile the King to Catholic Emancipation; and the latter had some cause for complaint at the secrecy in which the affair was enveloped. It does not, however, justify his irregular action in promptly sending for the Speaker, Addington, and sounding him for the Premiership.

This extraordinary event occurred on 30th January. Two days later Pitt wrote a letter respectfully but firmly requesting the King not to influence men's opinions while the projected measure was still in preparation. Then, deeming the royal reply wholly unsatisfactory, and knowing of the secret offer to Addington, he sent in his resignation (3rd February). George accepted it on the 5th, but urged him to continue in office until the new Cabinet could be formed and the supplies voted. To this Pitt assented. The royal missive also contained some words of affection for the man, but no word of thanks to the statesman for seventeen years of distinguished service. This ungracious silence probably resulted from what Malmesbury terms Pitt's and Grenville's "authoritative manners" to the King, whose annoyance had led him in August 1799 to try to substitute Windham and Malmesbury. Their loyalty to Pitt thwarted George; but now, in February 1801, he gladly seized the opportunity of ridding himself of his independent Ministers, in favour of weaker and more subservient men, Addington and Hawkesbury. As Pitt told Canning in October 1802, his resignation was due, not

merely to Catholic Emancipation, but to the manner in which he had been opposed.

The news fell like a thunderclap. The retirement of Washington during the Valley Forge period, of Abraham Lincoln before Gettysburg, or of Lloyd George during the last German push, would scarcely have created greater consternation than that of Pitt at the crisis of the Revolutionary War. "I have long looked on him as the Atlas of our reeling globe," such was the sad comment of Lord Minto, ambassador at Vienna. The need of bolstering up the new Administration being urgent, Pitt requested some of his colleagues, who now opposed Catholic Emancipation, or were undecided, to serve under Addington; and Portland, Chatham, Westmorland, and Liverpool were willing to do so. (Addington waived Loughborough aside.) On the other hand, Grenville, Camden, Dundas, Spencer, Windham, Cornwallis, and Castlereagh insisted on resigning with Pitt. These eight, then, believed that the promises of Emancipation were explicit enough to constitute a debt of honour and that such a measure was essential to the peace of Ireland. It is worth noting that Lord Spencer, in a letter of 9th February to Lord St Vincent, declared his resignation to be one of "indispensable necessity." Their conduct is clear. The conduct of the others is less so; for in the autumn of 1799, when Castlereagh was present at a Cabinet meeting on that subject, he "did not then hear any direct objection stated against the principle

of the measure by any one of the Ministers then present."

Such are the essential facts about Pitt's resignation. At bottom the question at issue is simple enough. Can a statesman honourably retain office when an important measure, by the promise of which he has assured the success of his policy, is contumeliously banned by the King with the approval of four Cabinet Ministers? Three courses were open. First, that which Pitt took; second, to remain in office and try to force the measure through Parliament against the royal will; third, to bow to that will and cling to office under the lead of Addington. The third alternative was unthinkable. The second (urged by Lecky as likely to succeed) would have caused terrible discords at a time when England, almost famine-stricken, was on the brink of war with Northern Europe. Further, Castlereagh was convinced that in the present circumstances the measure would not go through Parliament; and even if it did, the King would veto it. Besides, Pitt's rôle had been, so far as possible, to act as conciliator between King and people; and to promote schism now, at the crisis of the war, would be to belie both his character and career. The course which he took was open to grave objections; but, as the late Lord Morley wisely said, politics sometimes offers only a choice between evils; and Pitt, by standing aside and yet offering private support to the new Administration, took the least objectionable course open to him at that critical juncture.

During five weeks he continued to act as Prime Minister, until Addington completed his Cabinet.

The crisis was intensified by the King's attack of lunacy on 22nd February, which again brought about a time of confusion. Acting as Prime Minister *de facto*, Pitt was about to impose on the Regent the same restrictions as in 1789, when (as before) the King recovered (6th March). George then uttered to Lord Chatham words which ascribed to Pitt responsibility for the malady. On hearing them the statesman was much affected, and gave an assurance that he would not bring forward Catholic Emancipation during that reign. On personal grounds something may be said for this act. By soothing the patient it helped on recovery, thereby averting the grave risks of a Regency ; and after the defection of four Cabinet Ministers, Catholic Emancipation was impracticable. On the other hand, regard for the Irish Catholics and for his own consistency should have prevented such a surrender to the peevish convalescent—a surrender stultifying alike his Union policy and his resignation. On the whole, this episode must be judged a weak ending to what had been hitherto a statesman-like enterprise ; and it gave some colour to the suggestions that Pitt now repented of his resignation.

Censures, both public and private, showered upon him. That hot-headed and candid friend, Canning, spoke and wrote about his desertion, and rejected his request to join the new Administration. Faring-

ton records that his conduct was almost universally blamed. Fox saw in the substitution of Addington "a notorious juggle"; and diplomats like Malmesbury and Auckland, who were adepts at that game, and knew little or nothing about Pitt's commitments to the Irish Catholics, pronounced it a strategic prelude to a triumphant return. Lady Malmesbury thus embroidered on the theme: "It was agreed upon (she wrote) between Pitt and the King, for one to resign and the other to persist till the business in question was blown over, and then 'that the man was to have his mare again'." Over against these spiteful guesses we may place the verdict of a frank and intimate friend. Wilberforce thus summed up the whole question to the Marquis Wellesley: "It was not possible *at last* for Pitt to avoid retiring; . . . the greatness of mind with which he acted on the late trying occasion was such as to surprise as well as to delight me. And yet there seemed no straining, no effort; all was natural and easy—in such a degree as to render you insensible to the extraordinary magnanimity of his conduct."

Later critics of Pitt's resignation fall into two groups —those for whom the Irish question is everything, and those for whom the war is everything. Among the latter is the French historian, Sorel, who (ignoring the Irish issue) states that the King, out of jealousy of Pitt, abandoned him; and the Minister, resolving at all costs never to sign a disadvantageous peace, retired in order to let others sign it, and thereby

enhance his own fortunes. This thesis is untenable; for Pitt and Grenville were full of hope; they were about to despatch great expeditions to Copenhagen and to Alexandria, from which they rightly expected great results. In his speech of 2nd February, Pitt stoutly affirmed the necessity of resisting the claims of the Armed Neutrals, and, in explaining his Budget on the 18th, he rebuked the panic-mongers, and pointed to the expanding commerce and buoyant revenue as auguries of victory. "The present (he said) is the proudest year that has ever appeared for this country"—a truly prophetic utterance. Further, if he harboured the mean thought of leaving to his successor, Addington, the burden of making an unsatisfactory peace, why did he seek to strengthen the new Administration? The ablest recruit to its ranks, the Earl of St Vincent, was Pitt's own suggestion for the Admiralty. He also reproved Canning, first for refusing to remain in office, and then for spitefully witty attacks on "The Doctor."

Secondly, there are those who ignore the war and think only of the Irish problem. The Catholic Emancipation stalwarts maintain that he retired in order to set up a dummy Cabinet and shelve that measure. To them I may reply that the war (then in a very critical phase) was the great issue, and the Union was in the main a means of enhancing national strength in order to assure national survival. Pitt had first to consider how we could fight our way through against appalling odds. Personal reasons

precluded his remaining in power, but it was his bounden duty to consult, first of all, the public safety, which would best be assured by the continuance in office of those of his colleagues who were not pledged to Catholic Emancipation. The problem before him turned essentially on the promise of the Pitt Cabinet to the Irish Catholics; and the whole affair presented *nuances* which eluded the perception of many of his coarse-grained contemporaries. But it is difficult now to see how he could have acted differently, except in one particular, namely in retracting on the Catholic question. Here he acted weakly out of regard for the King's temperature, which varied thermometrically with it; but, as he did so within a few days of the completion of Addington's Cabinet, it is absurd to accuse him of trying at the last moment to set up a dummy Administration or creep back to office. (He himself stopped efforts that were made in this direction.) Charges like these deeply hurt him. Though cool and measured in his official explanation of 25th March, yet in private he could not discuss the crisis without deep emotion. "There were painful workings in his mind plainly discernible (wrote George Rose); most of the time tears in his eyes, and much agitated." Thus it was with a wounded spirit that Pitt entered upon the most delicate situation of his career.

CHAPTER XII

RETIREMENT

To descend with dignity from a pinnacle of fame to humdrum levels ; to keep even a semblance of control over puzzled or angry friends and urge them to support a successor whom they despised ; to watch him complacently gather in the fruits of the harvest which the Pitt Administration had sown ; to see the Union despoiled of the act of justice and clemency essential to its full success ; and, in private, to face the prospect of poverty, even of distraint by bailiffs, such was now the lot of Pitt.

Outwardly, the change was registered by his removal from the chill stateliness of Downing Street to a small house in Park Lane ; also by his sitting at St Stephen's at the end of the third row behind the new Ministers. As to his debts and urgent needs, he declined the gracious offer of £30,000 made by the King, lest he should seem to become his dependent ; whereupon his lifelong friend, Tomline, Bishop of Lincoln, tactfully suggested a private subscription, which he headed with £1000. Bathurst, Camden, Carrington, Steele, and Rose each gave the same. The total amount of £11,700 helped for the present to stave off a crisis,

and the sale of Holwood late in 1802 lessened the plunderings at his expense ; but at his death the debts exceeded £40,000. They were due to robberies by tradesmen and servants, to the excessive demands of his family upon him, to his very generous response to all patriotic calls, but also (one must add) to his own carelessness in private finance.

More serious were the inroads which the crisis made on his friendships. When Auckland publicly hinted that his resignation was due to secret and interested motives, he at once broke off all intercourse with him. Towards others also he cooled. Among them for a time was Canning. That youth, always versatile, never appreciated the strength of the motives which led to Pitt's resignation, followed by the cryptic request that Canning would serve under Addington. This last he indignantly declined ; and in April hotly declared that Pitt had misled him and was no longer his leader and friend. The statesman, pardoning this outburst of Celtic exuberance, sent a calm and friendly reply, whereupon the effervescence died down. Later on, it frothed up again, when Pitt chid him for his sallies against Addington :

"Happy Britain's guardian gander."

These squalls never for long disturbed Canning's deep fund of veneration ; and in the autumn of 1801, when he brought his bride to Walmer Castle, they lovingly tended Pitt during one of his many illnesses. Another stormy petrel who sought refuge there was Lady

Hester Stanhope. Driven from Chevening House by the levelling fads of her father, Earl Stanhope, she now found in her uncle the inspiration and stay of her wayward nature. The letters of Canning and Hester reveal charming glimpses of Pitt the friend and guardian, ever indulgent of fads and fancies, delighted by sallies of wit or girlish anger, answering jest with jest, quotation with quotation, the life of every circle, the guide in every difficulty. Would that a Boswell had been there to record even a few of the good things that enlivened Walmer Castle or the little house in Park Lane!

Pitt's ill-health in the autumn of 1801 was possibly due to political anxieties. For at London, on 1st October, Addington and Hawkesbury had signed the Preliminaries of Peace with France. No agreement of so much import has been framed so precipitately. England had no urgent need of peace. Since Pitt's retirement the triumph of Nelson at Copenhagen, the break up of the Armed Neutrality League, the brilliant successes in Egypt and in the Straits of Gibraltar had fulfilled Pitt's remarkable prophecy that this would be the proudest year of her history. His Cabinet, rejecting the tame defensive strategy which Bonaparte sought to impose by the great flotilla, had planned bold strokes in all quarters and reduced France to a stalemate. It is usual to say that the islanders were also stalemated; but this is incorrect. Their fleets having won decisive mastery at sea, they could now at last exert pressure on the enemy, and reduce him

to discomfort, even to distress. The future was to reveal this truth. Napoleon's conquest of the Continent after 1805 did not save him from final defeat by the Sea Power, which then carried through the war to its logical conclusion. In 1801 Addington concluded peace just when England had reached the stage most favourable to the exercise of her constrictive grip.

True, she was showing signs of war-weariness; but they were due to past or merely temporary causes, viz. heavy subsidies to our Allies and two exceedingly bad harvests. On the other hand, her permanent sources of prosperity — the new manufactures, the new high farming, and her maritime and colonial supremacy—endowed her with a fund of strength equalling, perhaps surpassing, that which the recent agrarian and political reforms had brought to France. Addington's Budget statement in July 1801 revealed the amazing progress made during the war. In 1800 the "real" value of British exports was about £39,000,000 as against £18,336,000 in 1792; for imports the figures were £54,500,000 and £10,366,000. In the same period the tonnage of British shipping had grown from 1,540,000 tons to 1,905,000.

Moreover, the fact that in September 1801 Bonaparte manifested a strong desire for peace should have warned Addington, Hawkesbury, and St Vincent of the permanent advantages now possessed by the mistress of the seas. But the weariness of the people, added to the financial stringency, led Ministers (partly

on Pitt's advice) hastily to close with Bonaparte's terms on 1st October, when he knew, and they did not know, of the capitulation of the last French garrison in Egypt. By the Preliminaries of London France was to recover all her colonies captured during the war; Spain and Holland regained theirs, except Trinidad and the Dutch posts in Ceylon; Egypt reverted to the Sultan, and Malta to the Knights of St John under the guarantee of some Third Power. No stipulation was made as to the renewal of commercial intercourse with France and her subject lands; and we virtually acquiesced in the recent extensions of her control over neighbouring States.

If we substitute Ceylon for the Cape, the colonial settlement resembled that which Pitt (not Grenville) was ready to accept in the summer of 1797, after the Mutinies. But in the interval Camperdown, the Nile, Copenhagen, and other successes at sea had enormously strengthened our general position. Therefore, as France now made good her immense losses overseas and gained complete supremacy in Southern and Western Europe, the finale to Britain's victorious efforts at sea must be pronounced wholly unsatisfactory; and Grenville very naturally summed it up to Bathurst as "the most disgraceful and ruinous measure that could have been adopted." Spencer, Camden, and Windham held the same views. Pitt, on the contrary, deemed the general result "highly satisfactory." He regretted the surrender of the Cape, but as "great authorities" differed as to its

importance, he deprecated the continuance of war on that count, and resolutely held to his secret promise of supporting the Addington Ministry. Herein he voiced the general opinion, which (so Steele wrote to Bathurst) supported the peace. The general public could not be expected to take a long view; but foresight is one of the essentials of statesmanship, and it nowhere appears in Pitt's support of the peace terms. Far different was the attitude of Grenville. His censure of the Preliminaries of London is described by Camden as inconceivably harsh. Spencer and Windham also opposed them strongly, the latter refusing an invitation to dine with Addington. On the other hand, St Vincent merged the First Lord in the partisan by the astounding declaration that the Treaty was "the very best this country ever made." Nelson (now a strong Addingtonion) surprised the Lords by depreciating Malta as a base and approving the vague conditions concerning it and the Cape; for (said he) now that Indiamen were coppered, they were not compelled to call there; and it was "merely a tavern on the passage." In this defence of the peace he carried with him all the peers but ten.

The issue in the Commons was decided largely by the pacific attitude of Pitt. In measured phrases he recommended the acceptance of the terms, though they were perhaps less than adequate; for he himself, since 1795, had sought, though unsuccessfully, to secure peace on any terms that might be deemed reasonable. Never had he insisted on the restoration

of the Bourbons, but, up to that date, had merely declared that there was no French Government with which we could safely treat. Now there was; for anarchic Jacobinism had given way to a military despotism, and peace was merely a question of terms. Coming to details, he regretted our surrender of the Cape (on the possession of which he set so much store in 1795 and 1797), and to a less extent of Malta; but he pronounced the latter case a justifiable concession to French susceptibilities. Besides, "compared with the East and West Indies, the Mediterranean is a secondary consideration."

This singular utterance (which ignores the importance of that sea as the highway to the Levant) is partly explained by his insistence that the peace terms offered the best securities for our East and West Indies. In this respect he placed Ceylon and Trinidad ahead of all alternative posts, preferring the latter to our traditional naval base, St Lucia, or even to Martinique, for the defence of the Leeward Isles. Here the facts of the two last wars were against him; for they showed our inability to defend those islands from the French fleet based on Martinique, unless we possessed its strategic counterpart, St Lucia. Indeed, the surrender of St Lucia must be pronounced a serious strategic blunder, almost equalling that whereby we placed both the overland and sea routes to India at the mercy of Bonaparte. But it was in vain that these defects were pointed out. The Lower House accepted the peace terms without a division (3rd November).

Pitt's advocacy must be discounted by the fact that he had promised to support Addington whenever he could honourably do so. This tie was known to the Grenville group, and lessened their animosity to Pitt as a man. Nevertheless Pitt as a leader they now abjured. Canning's patriotic detestation of the peace terms severely strained, but did not sever, his allegiance. Cobbett railed at the statesman and declared that city men accused him of "abominable insincerity." On the whole, his reputation suffered during the wranglings about the peace; for in 1793 he accepted war in order to maintain the independence of the Netherlands; yet they were now left virtually under French control.

The wranglings were renewed when the definitive Treaty of Amiens (27th March 1802) proved to be worse than the Preliminaries. Owing to the softness of Ministers and the "drowsiness" of their plenipotentiary, Cornwallis, the stipulations concerning Malta and the Cape were more complex and less favourable. According to Lord Malmesbury, Pitt, during a ride with him in Hyde Park on 8th April 1802, admitted the unreality of his hopes of a reconciliation with France; for Bonaparte's recent high-handed aggressions on neighbouring States showed him to be "the same rapacious insatiable plunderer," utterly devoid of good faith, whom we must resolutely oppose if he further interfered with Holland or Spanish America. Moreover, only a very few years of rest would enable England to support the strain of

a long war. If the Government acted firmly he (Pitt) would still support it.

With this hope he supported it throughout the forthcoming parliamentary attacks on the Treaty of Amiens, which were repelled by 276 votes to 20. One incident alone lit up these dreary debates. The Foxites having arraigned Pitt as the author of the late war, his admirers passed a motion of thanks for his great and meritorious services, to which there were only fifty-two dissentients. A further sign of trust in his directing genius was the enthusiastic reception accorded to Canning's song: "The Pilot that weathered the Storm." It was sung at a dinner given on Pitt's birthday, 25th May, for inaugurating a Pitt Club, which became the parent of many similar patriotic societies.

Buttressed by Pitt's support, Addington won a sweeping victory at the ensuing general election. For a time his position seemed unassailable. Nevertheless, as it rested on the assumption that peace would endure, it was steadily undermined by the Napoleonic aggressions at the expense of neighbouring States, which rendered peace more dangerous than war. Finally, but too late, Addington decided to stiffen his Mediterranean policy, and as a safeguard demanded the cession of Malta to us during ten years. Thereupon the rupture occurred in mid-May 1803.

The crisis brought Pitt forth after a long time of retirement. His entrance to the House was greeted by shouts of "Pitt, Pitt," from members both new and

old ; but his enemy, Creevey, describes him as yellow, troubled by a hollow cough, dejected—in fact, "done"; for all the Princes of the blood had passed him by without notice! Three days later the verdict changed. "The great fiend" (wrote that *bon vivant*) excelled himself in elevation of thought, infinite energy, and clearness of style. "Never, to be sure, was there such an exhibition; its effect was dreadful. He spoke nearly two hours, all for war, and war without end. . . . He exhorted, or rather commanded Ministers to lose no time in establishing measures of finance suited to our situation." After pulverising a diffuse and ineffective speech of Erskine, the orator finally aroused the House to a pitch of enthusiasm, which (says Farington) found expression in a "Hear, hear" three times repeated, and had the effect of three cheers. Fox, who followed in a lighter vein, began by saying that, if Demosthenes had been present, he must have admired, and might have envied, that oration. Fate, however, willed that it should survive only in a jejune summary, while Pitt's far weaker speech of 3rd June was fully reported. He then took a middle line on Addington's rather halting war measures, and found only 56 supporters against a Ministerial phalanx of 333.

Pitt's refusal to oppose Ministers outright brought urgent remonstrances from his former supporters. One, from Canning, which Malmesbury pronounced "too fault-finding for even Pitt's good-humoured mind," elicited a sharp retort, whereupon Canning

exclaimed: "P. has thrown all away. Us, the Country, and Himself, in consideration of which last we must forgive the other two" (18th June). In truth, his position became agonising. He could be released from his promise to support Addington only by that statesman, who, either from hide-bound complacence, or from deep astuteness, refused to give the least sign of absolution. Pitt therefore had to content himself with seeking to invigorate the tardy and tepid efforts of the Ministry, by urging a general levy of the people for defence, the erection of field works to cover London, and the strengthening of the Navy and the coast flotilla.

From July to December he spent most of the time at Walmer Castle, superintending a farm which he had leased (Middleton pronounced him a keen student of the new high farming), also in drilling the local Volunteers and supervising the plans for "driving" the country in case of invasion. That danger, by no means remote, added zest to the drills, which he, as colonel, carried through with a thoroughness utterly boring to Lady Hester. His opponents, including Grenville, laughed at this "soldiering"; but Hester's letter (15th November 1803) shows that General Dundas was equally surprised and pleased at the efficiency of Pitt's regiment; also that the long spells in the open had strengthened him greatly, and he was determined to lead his men when called to take the field. From Sir John Moore, commander at Shorncliffe Camp, he sustained an amusing rebuff. On

asking him what part the Volunteers would take in case of a landing near Hythe, the General pointed to the rising ground and said, " I would post you there while we soldiers do the fighting on the beach."

In the following winter proposals for Pitt's entry into the Ministry broke down. Their only significance is that they reveal his good-will to Addington and the extraordinary complacence of the latter, though by this time his finance aroused contempt and his defence measures alarm. Their inadequacy was such as again to draw Pitt from retirement. On 27th February 1804 he sharply criticised them, especially the lack of due encouragement and training of the Volunteers.

Even more important were his attacks on the naval administration. Herein he has been accused of gross unfairness to the Earl of St Vincent, who certainly resented them. Yet it should be remembered that Pitt had always taken a keen interest in the Navy, while his removal of Lord Chatham from the headship of the Admiralty had shown that no private considerations would curb his efforts for efficiency. We also now know from the *Barham Papers* that his strictures on the Admiralty tallied with those of Middleton, who blamed the alarming depletion of timber and naval stores. In justice to St Vincent, it should be remembered that he had inherited very depleted stores from Spencer, also that peace economies had been enjoined on him. In fact, he was beset by inveterate abuses at the dockyards, against which he manfully struggled, and he was the victim of a pro-

found miscalculation in national policy which could not soon be set right. The censures of Middleton and Pitt were therefore misplaced. Further, it is certain that Pitt (herein supported by the Foxites) underrated the increases effected by St Vincent since May 1803. He was probably right in urging that more work should be given to private yards, but he erred in pressing for the construction of many gun-brigs and gun-vessels for coast defence. Here expert opinion was against him. Seamen believed that our fleets and frigate squadrons would hold fast the hostile flotillas; and the House, sharing their opinion, rejected the Pitt-Fox combination by 71 votes. Nevertheless, they continued their attacks on St Vincent's administration, and singled it out as, next to Addington's finance, the Government's weakest point. So angered was the Earl, that, a year later, he indignantly refused the command of the Channel Fleet, which Pitt then offered to him.

Meanwhile, another complication had occurred. In February 1804 the King, worried by the attacks on his favourite Premier, fell into an irritable nervous state, his hurried manners and quick pulse betokening a return of lunacy. Thereupon the Prince of Wales began to hold a private Cabinet, including Fox, to prepare for a Regency. Added to this, Grenville, unable to move Pitt, allied himself to Fox, with the view of forming one more national party, composed of men of all parties, for the sake of turning out Addington. On their side, the Grenvilles and Spencers

gave out that, in reality, they were " playing Pitt's game " in a way that would probably bring him back to power. Camden warned Pitt of these tactics, and (as he wrote to Bathurst) persuaded him to try to strengthen the Government's weak Volunteer Bill, and to avow his intention of still supporting Ministers if they acted with vigour. Of this there was no sign. Fox summed up the situation in the phrase that Addington had " not one unpaid defender."

During many days the King lost his reason, and underwent a serious relapse in March, even after recovery seemed assured. The Prince of Wales and his set behaved as if the game was theirs. Thus, as happened three years before, personal issues of grave moment aggravated a serious national crisis, and for a time made England the despair of her friends and seemingly the sport of her great enemy. Fortunately Cornwallis off Brest and Nelson off Toulon kept up their ceaseless vigil, damning to inactivity the vast apparatus of Napoleon's flotilla. His omission to attempt a crossing in those weeks of our greatest confusion and weakness proves the impossibility of an invasion while these two admirals kept their stations.

But, while George hovered between sanity and insanity, England could hope to gain no Ally ; for who would trust a Court and Cabinet in a state of flux ? Pitt and Malmesbury therefore deemed the salvation of England dependent on the preservation of the King's health. Its importance increased as Adding-

ton's prestige declined. A serious blow to the Minister was the collapse of the French Royalist plot (an affair in which some of his junior colleagues were implicated) and the trend of French politics towards absolutism. The triumph of Napoleonic autocracy being assured, England had need of her strongest men, irrespective of party. All eyes turned towards Pitt; and after the Easter vacation he resolved to act with the Fox and Grenville groups for the ejection of Addington and the formation of a comprehensive Administration. The public safety being the vital issue, he entered into no engagement with them concerning so contentious a topic as Catholic Emancipation. Their joint attack was upon the naval and military administration. On 23rd April Fox moved for a Committee of Inquiry into the national defences, and Pitt fired off a great speech upbraiding the Government for utter poverty in invention of plans, tardy adoption of those of others, and a miserably weak execution. Horner, who was present, pronounced it a powerful indictment of the Government, "delivered, however, as if at last, after much consideration and reluctance; but he enforced it with a good deal of grave vehement declamation in his way and some touches of that bitter freezing sarcasm which everybody agrees is his most original talent." The speech riddled the policy of the Government, which, however, mustered a majority of 52. These numbers sank to 37 two days later, when Pitt returned to the charge and censured the Government proposal to suspend

the Army of Reserve Act. Pointing out the superiority of this force to the Militia, he suggested the reduction of the latter by 24,000 men and the increase of the Army of Reserve from 40,000 to 64,000. Then, rising from details to principles, he bade the House remember what was at stake :—

"Amid the wreck and misery of nations it is our just exultation that we have continued superior to all that ambition or despotism could effect; and our still higher exultation ought to be that we provide not only for our own safety, but hold out a prospect to nations now bending under the iron yoke of tyranny what the exertions of a free people can effect; and that at least in this corner of the world the name of liberty is still revered, cherished, and sanctified."

These speeches sealed the doom of Addington, and, on the morrow, he informed the King that the Cabinet must resign. The King's anger blazed forth against the Opposition, and he even proposed a dissolution of Parliament; but, on the perils of such a step being pointed out, he calmed down, and declared his desire to prevent confusion in the realm. Yet everything made for confusion. The party groups formed a Babel. Fox and his Grenville allies had little in common. In private he dubbed the war "the foolishest of all wars"; yet they were for war *à outrance*. Even acting in concert, the two groups could do nothing without the support of Pitt, whom Grenville half distrusted and Fox wholly detested. Behind them was the ultra-Royalist *frondeur*, Windham. Before Pitt were Anti-Jacobin Canning and

other wits, all restive under the leading-rein. The complacent "Doctor" still kept most of his patients together on the plea that no one else would do better —a theme daily embroidered on by the *Times*, with lectures to the groups greedy of power. Yet, one and all, these defenders of England proclaimed their sole desire to be her saviours. Even Fox admitted (in private) that he was prepared to "temporise" on Catholic Emancipation. But, once again, that question was destined to come in as the great political solvent.

Private ambitions also warped the great national issue. We now know from the *Bathurst Papers* that the Prince of Wales angled for Pittite support; but when his envoy, Lord Hutchinson, referred to the great importance of the Prince, Pitt showed a flash of the old spirit in the retort: "As a political character, I know nothing of the Prince, except as the King's son." Fortunately the King's convalescence at the end of April lessened this complication; but the certainty of a return of lunacy if his conscience were ruffled remained a powerfully disturbing factor. And George knew it. He also knew from Pitt's letter, delivered on 27th April, that the statesman had not committed himself to the Fox-Grenville programme, which ostensibly included Catholic Emancipation. The King therefore dominated the whole situation. Hectic phrases in his reply reveal a sense of mastery. He rebuked Pitt for bringing the name of Fox "before his royal notice," and commented angrily on the

conduct of those who in 1801 had dared to bring forward so subversive a measure as Catholic Emancipation. Clearly his convictions on this topic retained all their old fervour ; and little was to be hoped from the interview which the King accorded on 7th May. Pitt feared lest their meeting, after a lapse of three years, would unsteady the monarch's nerves. His fears were groundless. George played his winning game coolly and subtly. To all Pitt's arguments on behalf of a truly national administration he turned a deaf ear. Fox he utterly scouted ; but, as a favour, admitted that some embassy might be found for him. The Grenvilles were coldly tolerated. Pitt himself was accepted patronisingly as a concession to popular folly. A discussion of three hours failed to abate the royal resolves. Pitt afterwards said that never had the King so baffled him ; and he probably regretted the extreme anxiety about the royal health, which prompted his unfortunate letter.

In the thorny scrub of political life an undeviating course is often impossible. Certainly Pitt's conduct was ambiguous ; it was warped both by the earlier promise not to bring forward Catholic Emancipation in that reign, and now again by that letter, which encouraged George to exclude Fox. Both mistakes were clearly due to Pitt's obsession by that inveterate bogey, the royal lunacy, and its roystering twin, a Prince of Wales Vanity Fair. His fears are unintelligible to us, who can scarcely realise the dangers of a Carlton House *régime* in 1804 ; but every careful student of

those times will reject the taunts of duplicity showered on him from that time to this; for he had made no definite promise to Fox; he acted with him for the ejection of an incompetent Premier; and the responsibility for scouting the Whig leader lay with the King.

As usually happens when passion warps a political problem, the solution reached was the worst possible. The animus of Fox against Pitt now reached its climax; and it infected the Grenvilles and Windham, either from their doubts as to Pitt's integrity or from resentment at his softness about the peace terms. Ostensibly they opposed him because his Administration was not all-comprehensive—an argument fit for Utopia, but self-damning in the midst of the Napoleonic War. Pitt alone could embattle England; and to oppose him now was treason to her and to common sense. These airy abstentionists formed one more quizzical group, thereby compelling him to rely increasingly on the Addingtonian wing and become more and more Tory. In proportion as the political outlook darkened, sectional antagonisms intensified; for when men cannot strike at the enemy outside they are apt to fall foul of one another. Indeed, all went awry. Neither from Windsor nor from Fleet Street was help forthcoming. Daily the *Times* lectured Pitt on the crime of ousting a virtuous Minister and seizing on power which he could not possibly wield.

Such was the position in May–June 1804. Not even the elder Pitt, on his accession to office in the summer of 1757, had so uphill a fight as his son in this,

his second Ministry. Both father and son had to struggle on almost single-handed, but the son had the far heavier task of confronting a war-genius incarnate. Nevertheless, he speedily won the nation's confidence as appeared when Consols rose three points within three months of his becoming Prime Minister.

CHAPTER XIII

WILLIAM III REDIVIVUS

Pitt took office on 10th May ; Napoleon was declared Emperor of the French on 18th May. The concurrence of these events illustrates the strength of the vital instinct which at a crisis calls on the ablest leader to take the helm. But, in other respects, what a difference there was between Paris and London. There all the powers of a highly centralised Empire were wielded by an autocrat then in the heyday of his strength. Here a doubtful primacy over divided and discordant groups fell to the lot of a delicate and outworn man of forty-five years, whose efforts to found a national administration ended in the grouping together of offshoots from the last two administrations.

The new Cabinet was more than half Addingtonian, but with Addington for the time left out. Lord Eldon retained his seat on the woolsack ; Dundas (now Viscount Melville) replaced the far more experienced Earl of St Vincent at the Admiralty ; the invalidish Earl of Harrowby (formerly Dudley Ryder) at the Foreign Office scarcely improved on Hawkesbury, who

was transferred to the Home Office; and Camden at the War Office soon bent under his Herculean toils. Castlereagh, at the India Board, was the only thoroughly good appointment. Portland, Westmorland, Chatham, and Mulgrave completed the Cabinet. Canning and Rose snorted and sighed at receiving non-Cabinet posts. With so many feuds and jealousies undermining Pitt's position, it is not surprising that his domestic legislation was weak. After one or two rebuffs he gave up all hope of abolishing the Slave Trade. As to Catholic Emancipation, he was fatally hampered, first, by the Addingtonian majority in his Cabinet; secondly, by his promise to the King not to bring that measure forward again. Hoping to embarrass him, the Opposition dragged it forward; and they succeeded in convicting him of inconsistency, Sheridan fiercely taunting him with treachery to the Catholics. Pitt retorted that he was under no pledge to them, which was true; but he did not show why a measure which in 1801 he pronounced "desirable, advisable, and important," was now inexpedient. The House, however, supported him by a majority of 212 votes.

While the Opposition (the champions of a comprehensive union) sought to embarrass the only man who could hold together a working majority, he was building up a system of national defence. It was a task of appalling difficulty; for the continued formation of super-party unions had by now reduced parties to groups, Parliament to chaos, and Pitt's Cabinet almost

to helplessness. In truth, he held his ground during twenty weary months only owing to a belated perception of the fairly obvious fact that no one else could hope to stand erect half as long. No help was forthcoming from the King, who pined for his intellectual compeer, Addington, and added to the general confusion by quarrelling with his family, hobnobbing with servants, and issuing crazy orders, *e.g.* for the concentration of our chief army of defence at—Weymouth. A boisterous Opposition, eagerly noting all these follies, counted on a Regency—" and then the game's our own " (wrote Creevey). It also trusted to wear down Pitt's strength by sheer bullying; and in all probability his daily potations of port wine became deeper as a means of shaking off the day's worries. A parliamentary system is always at a disadvantage during a conflict with a great military autocracy; and in 1804 everything at Westminster made for national weakness.

Pitt and Camden tried hard to solve the difficult problem of co-ordinating the Regular Army, the Army of Reserve, Militia, and Volunteers on a voluntary basis. In brief his proposals were (1) to reduce the Militia to its old total of 48,000 men, and to attract the balance (at least 26,000 men) to the Regular Army during the war; (2) to apply further pressure to parishes which did not furnish the requisite quota of men; (3) to form the new levies into second battalions attached to existing battalions; (4) to improve the training of Volunteers. Sheridan having raised the

old scarecrow of a standing army and fantastically extolled the plan of a levy in mass, Pitt pleaded for efficiency rather than numbers, and claimed that his plan provided extra trustworthy troops for the time of war. He carried the second reading of his Bill by only 42 votes (18th June).

In the sister service the outlook was more promising, probably because the spade-work done by St Vincent was now beginning to tell. His successor, Melville, had as semi-official adviser Sir Charles Middleton. That experienced seaman (always a severe critic of St Vincent) commented sharply on the lack of trained shipwrights and seasoned timber at the dockyards in 1803–4, and applied to Melville the high praise that never in the same time were so many judicious measures "brought forward for the benefit of the Navy, nor [with] anything like the energy with which they are carrying into execution." Certainly the increase in the numbers of sail-of-the-line in commission for sea was satisfactory. At the beginning of the years 1804, 1805, 1806 they were 75, 83, 104. At the same dates the numbers building or ordered to be built were 19, 26, 26. The development of light craft, especially gun-brigs, was even more marked. It is also worth noting that, in June 1805, Napoleon censured his Admiralty for being ten years behind the British in that deadly weapon the carronade.

Seeing the isolation of England and Napoleon's alliance with the Dutch and control over Spain, Pitt

wisely decided not to rely solely on the fleet and flotilla, which might be evaded by enemies possessing numerous naval bases and great shipbuilding power. He and Camden therefore resolved (in consultation with engineers) to construct the Hythe Military Canal and thereby isolate Romney Marsh, the most likely landing-place of the Boulogne Flotilla. Martello towers, already planned by Colonel Twiss, were now begun. Thanks largely to Pitt's example in East Kent, the Volunteer movement spread rapidly through the Kingdom. His popularity at Deal and Walmer led the local boatmen to promise that they would man fifty gunboats.

Pitt infused new vigour into foreign policy. In June 1804 he and Harrowby welcomed Russia's overture for an alliance, which the Tzar's exacting demands long deferred. Austria and, still more, Prussia held aloof until too late. At the end of 1804 the expected rupture with Spain occurred, but in a way somewhat damaging to British prestige. The circumstances were these. By a treaty concluded in 1796 Spain agreed to support France with 15 sail-of-the-line and 24,000 troops. In the present war, hoping to maintain a semblance of neutrality, she bargained to substitute a sum of money, which was fixed at about £3,000,000 a year, or more than one-third of her total revenue. This alone rendered her neutrality farcical; but, besides this, she was constrained to shelter and repair a French squadron in her port of Ferrol, which we therefore had to blockade. In her other ports pre-

parations were going on of so warlike a nature that the Pitt Cabinet urgently protested. Remonstrances being useless, Ministers finally decided to detain the armed Spanish frigates bringing treasure from America; but, the intercepting force being accidently lessened, a fight took place in which one of the Spaniards blew up (5th October). The act was high-handed, and Ministers should have brought about the rupture in a less compromising way. Yet they certainly had a strong case against Spain and long treated her with extreme forbearance. Middleton, in a Memorandum of 3rd July 1804, urged that we ought to look on the Spanish fleet "as added to the force of our other enemies at any moment it suits the interest of France to call upon it for that purpose." Clearly, the real instigator of the rupture was Napoleon, who was using Spain as his tool. Appearances, however, being against us, the Opposition sought to make capital out of the affair. Thereupon, all the relevant documents having been printed, Pitt had little difficulty in proving the patience of British policy, and in explaining the seizure of the frigates which formed the weakest part of our case. Grey's hostile amendment was accordingly rejected by 313 votes to 106 (12th February 1805). The episode tended to strengthen Pitt's position in Parliament; and the nation at large regarded the open hostility of Spain as preferable to an insidious neutrality.

Pitt, Melville, and Camden having been accused of recklessly planning naval and military enterprises

without taking expert advice, we may notice their conduct respecting a suggested attack on Ferrol. As naval opinion favoured it, they consulted General Sir John Moore, in whose training of troops at Shorncliffe Camp Pitt took great interest. He was sent to reconnoitre the works at Ferrol and, his report being unfavourable, the plan was dropped.

Pitt's war policy has been hotly arraigned. But, except at sea, the struggle against a great military Empire governed by Napoleon was very uphill work for the embarrassed Minister of a limited monarchy. Who has yet discovered a sure and prompt way of embattling a non-military people and a Parliament prone to faction and fault-finding? To lead the House of Commons taxed Pitt's slight reserve of strength. How could he also direct the public finances, supervise the long and difficult negotiations with Russia, weigh the plans for defensive or offensive operations, stimulate the Volunteer movement, and buoy up the national spirit? Britons expect too much from the Prime Minister at all times. In war-time they demand the impossible. Here lies the secret of our long and weary fumblings after success.

The strength of faction was illustrated early in the spring of 1805. It then transpired that in Pitt's former Administration Melville had not prevented the misuse of naval funds by Trotter, the deputy treasurer. On 8th April Whitbread moved a series of resolutions against him in a very damaging speech.

Pitt urged that the whole case should be examined by a special Parliamentary Committee; but owing to the judicial speech of Wilberforce, the votes for and against Melville were equal, the Speaker giving the casting vote against him. Amidst coarse shouts and cries of "Resign" Pitt staggered from the House, an almost broken man. Thereupon "with a deep and bitter pang" he advised the King to dismiss the Viscount from the Privy Council; and he resigned his position as First Lord of the Admiralty. Nevertheless, the impeachment, which took place a year later, tended to rehabilitate him. Considerable majorities then absolved him from blame; and only in respect to the charge of his connivance at Trotter's improper use of the money did the Lords acquit him by the narrow margin of 31 votes to 27. These verdicts, of course, came too late to comfort Pitt. From the stab dealt on 8th April 1805 he never wholly recovered.

The indecent raptures of Pitt's enemies on that occasion are now fortunately unintelligible. Take the case of Creevey. No sense of public duty impelling Parliament thoroughly to probe charges of peculation appears in his Bacchic outbursts: "We have had indeed most famous sport with Lord Melville. His tumbling so soon was unexpected by all of us. . . . You can form no notion of his [Pitt's] fallen crest in the House of Commons, of his dolorous, distracted air. He betrayed Melville only to save himself. . . . His own ruin must come next, and

that, I think, at no great distance." Creevey cherished great hopes of upsetting Pitt by the raking up of an irregularity which he had committed in the year 1796. He then secretly advanced £40,000 of public money, on adequate security, for the temporary relief of a large firm which contracted for two Government loans payable in a time of great stringency. Whitbread arraigned Pitt on 14th June 1805, and, to Creevey's great disgust, Fox refused to censure his conduct; so did the House, and it passed the Bill of Indemnity, which Pitt certainly ought to have required at the time. His two last important speeches at Westminster were on this topic and Melville's impeachment. He emerged from the session, shaken indeed, but indomitable. For meanwhile he had delivered England from the tame defensive to which Addingtonian mediocrity had condemned her; and he had set in motion forces that were destined after a long and dreary interval to overthrow the great enemy.

In the midst of the hubbub about Melville, a great strategist and administrator took his place at the Admiralty. Sir Charles Middleton, at eighty years of age, shouldered the burden of national defence with the energy and foresight of a man of forty, and rendered his new title, Lord Barham, for ever famous. Incidentally the appointment offended Addington (now Lord Sidmouth), who had joined the Cabinet in January, and he and a colleague soon resigned. But, though it increased Pitt's difficulties at home,

yet it helped on the solution of the most critical and complex of naval campaigns. For that was the time of Villeneuve's voyage to the West Indies, of Nelson's pursuit and prompt return to Europe; and the experience and sagacity of the new First Lord contributed materially to the triumphant issue.

Three other really important events mark that spring and summer. On 11th April was signed the Anglo-Russian treaty of alliance, which ended the long isolation of England, laid the foundations for the Third Coalition, and outlined the future scheme for the reconstruction of Europe. Secondly, as the compact required co-operation with Russia for the defence of the Kingdom of Naples, an expedition was prepared at Portsmouth under Sir James Craig. It set sail for the Mediterranean in April, and, after encountering great risks, fulfilled the major part of its mission, which was to retort on Napoleon's offensives by a counter-offensive in his own preserve. In the sphere of marine strategy it won a complete success; for the Emperor's exasperation led him in October to force out Villeneuve from Cadiz into the Mediterranean. Hence Trafalgar. Thirdly, Pitt's resolve to wrest the initiative from Napoleon led to equally great results in the Southern Ocean. Barham and he prepared another expedition, which, sailing in the autumn, conquered the Cape of Good Hope, thus assuring the safety of the sea route to India. Seeing, too, that his firmness had repelled the

Muscovite attempts to cozen us out of Malta, he had no small share in safeguarding the overland route.

Compared with these vital issues, how petty were the quarrels at Westminster! But they sapped his strength. A further strain fell on him after the resignation of Addington and another colleague (4th July); for, when he sought to make this good by bringing in Fox and the Grenvilles, the King, in a rather stormy interview at Weymouth, angrily refused. It then appeared that George disliked Lord Grenville as much as Fox. Thus, at the autumnal equinox vanished the last chance of securing a national union and a thoroughly competent Foreign Secretary. It was the King's last contribution to Pitt's undoing, but unfortunately not his last to the annals of bigotry.

Though beset with these cares and annoyances, Pitt found time to feel the pulse of naval and military operations; and elsewhere I have cited clear proof of his share in Barham's brilliant naval combination of July 1805, which laid the spectre of a French invasion. But through the autumn his strength waned. Rallying for a time at the news of Trafalgar, Pitt made his classic utterance at the Lord Mayor's banquet, that England had saved herself by her exertions and would save Europe by her example. Prophetic for the future, it was belied by the present; for, while Nelson triumphed at Trafalgar, Austria lost her best army at Ulm; and both Austria and

Russia were felled to the ground at Austerlitz (2nd December).

That battle is said to have killed Pitt. The statement is overcharged. For on 1st January 1806, while again taking the cure at Bath, he wrote to Bathurst: "It is impossible not to disbelieve above nine-tenths of the French bulletins, and not to doubt a good deal the fact of the armistice as stated; but there is no knowing what to believe till Hamburg mails arrive." And again, on 3rd January: "My nights are certainly better. I cannot yet say anything as to my appetite." Thus his hopeful nature long rejected the thought of Austria's surrender and Russia's retirement. But the later news, as it filtered in, must have staggered him, and probably induced the symptoms which led to his return home to Bowling Green House on Putney Heath by 11th January. That his rallying power ebbed slowly appears in a letter written on the next day to welcome home his friend, the Marquis Wellesley, after that long and brilliant Viceroyalty in India. He begged him to come to see him, and added: "I am recovering rather slowly from a series of stomach complaints, followed by severe attacks of gout, but I believe I am now in the way of real amendment." Wellesley found him in very high spirits, while his intellect was as clear as ever. Apparently the effort was too great, for he fainted soon after.

The deathblow fell on the morrow at the news of the defection of Prussia. Counting eagerly on her co-operation, he had despatched to Hanover a British

expeditionary force to assist in freeing the Netherlands. He also sent Harrowby on a special mission to Berlin with potent inducements to Prussia to intervene betimes against Napoleon, as indeed ordinary prudence should have counselled. The mission utterly failed; for, after promising to shield that expeditionary force, she concluded a mean bargain with Napoleon on terms which involved its expulsion from North Germany. Such was the bitter news which cut Pitt in twain. Thenceforth his strength quickly ebbed; and on the 23rd he passed away.

In no duel between the protagonists of two nations has the tyranny of the physical been exerted with sharper incisiveness. Pitt, the senior of Napoleon by ten years, had been worn to the bone by parliamentary naggings and Allied perversities; his rival combined to a unique degree bodily strength with political and military self-sufficiency. Milton's mighty lines

> "Never since created man
> Met such imbodied force"

might have been applied to him; while Pitt's slighter form recalls the poet's praise of Abdiel:—

> "Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
> His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal."

Critics have censured Pitt, and not without reason, for relying too much on uncertain Allies; but as Great

Britain refused to conscript her sons for the Army, he, like Chatham, had perforce to enlist continental support. The chief difference was that in 1756–62 Prussia held firm ; while in 1795–1805 she twice played us false, ruined both wars, and, incidentally, killed Pitt.

Further, he wielded a weapon which works slowly. Sea power, exerted against a great continental State, produces results which are tantalisingly gradual and only cumulatively crushing. On the other hand, armies, when marshalled by a great genius, can overwhelm a neighbour in a campaign ; but they cannot avert from their own land the constrictive pressure of ever-victorious fleets. That pressure Pitt had begun to exert on all the seas around France, also from posts so distant as the Cape, St Lucia, Demerara, and Surinam—conquests far more vital than those of North Italy, South Germany, and Vienna by Napoleon's troops.

Finally, Pitt's method of inspiring his followers with lofty ideals of public duty both towards their own and the continental peoples proved ultimately to be more effective than the Napoleonic autocracy, which produced, first servants, and finally tools or renegades. The one system trained up Canning and Castlereagh : the other produced Bassano, Talleyrand, and Marmont. Accordingly, when we regard, not merely the first round of the struggle, but its consummation, Pitt no longer appears as the weakling done to death by Austerlitz, but rather as William III *redivivus*, the

initiator of great designs destined under happier auspices to embattle Europe against her oppressor. In January 1806 his frail body could struggle on no longer; but the unconquerable spirit soared on, animating and guiding his followers to the efforts which finally assured the triumph of his country and the liberation of the Continent.

INDEX

Abercromby, Sir Ralph, retreat from Holland, 122; Helder expedition, 159.
Acton, Lord, quoted, 102.
Addington, Dr Anthony, 88.
Addington, Henry (Viscount Sidmouth), suggests voluntary contributions, 150; Premier, 175; supported by Lords, 176; Farington on, 179; peace with France, 184, 185; supported by Pitt, 190, 192; naval administration, 193; loss of prestige, 196; resigns, 197, 198, 210.
Alaska, 82.
Alexandria, 180.
Aliens Bill, 112.
America, North, 82.
American Colonies, Independence of. *See* United States.
Amiens, Treaty of, 189, 190.
Anglo-American War (1812–14), 84.
Antwerp, Siege of, 106.
Arkwright, Sir Richard, 37.
Armistead, Mrs, 88.
Army, the, condition of, 29, 120; reduction of, 117, 118; co-ordination of, 204.
Artois, Comte d'. *See* Charles X.
Auckland, Lord. *See* Eden, William.
Augereau, General, 143.
Austerlitz, 213.
Australia, 80–81.
Austria, peace with Turkey (1790), 61; unreliable ally, 115; Third Partition of Poland, 123; treaty with Catharine II, 125; proposals for peace, 133, 135; Second Coalition, 158; losses at Ulm, 158. *See* Joseph II *and* Leopold II.
Balance of Power, the, 59, 60, 63, 66, 93.
Baltic, the, 60.
Banks, Sir Joseph, 81.
Barham, Lord (Sir Charles Middleton), the Navy, 11; Comptroller of the Navy, 44; resignation, 46; his miscalculations, 115; censures on naval matters, 194; made adviser, 205; at the Admiralty, 210; Cape of Good Hope, 211, 212.
Barham Papers, The, quoted, 193.
Bassano, Duc de, 109, 215.
Batavia, 58.
Bathurst Papers, The, 198.
Bavaria, 50, 116.
Beaufoy, Henry, 93.
Belgic Provinces, 50; revolt against Joseph II, 61; taken by France, 106.
Board of Trade, 40.
Bonaparte. *See* Napoleon Bonaparte.
Botany Bay, 80, 81.
Bourbon Restoration, 160, 161.
Brest, French fleet at, 170.
Bribery, 170.
Bridport, Lord (Alexander Hood), 129, 152.
Brissot, Jean Pierre, 110.
British Columbia, 86.
Brooks's Club, 91.
Burke, Edmund, on Fox, 17; resigns, 21; Economic Reform, 18, 34, 43; and India Bill, 35; and war conditions (1793), 120; *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, 130; and Jacobins, 130; mentioned, 15, 16, 19, 24, 33, 69, 73, 91.

Camden, Earl (Charles Pratt), succeeded by Cornwallis in Ireland

165; resigns in 1802, 176; peace proposals, 187; Secretary of War, 203, 204.
Camperdown, 143, 186.
Campo Formio, Treaty of, 143.
Canada, rise of, 83.
Canada Act (1791), Pitt's, 83, 84.
Canning, George, 137, 180, 187, 189; his song on Pitt, 190; supports peace measures, 141; the "Anti-Jacobin," 197; relations with Pitt, 178, 183, 184, 192, 215; excluded from Cabinet (1804), 203; influenced by Pitt, 215.
Canterbury, Archbishop of, 91.
Cape of Good Hope, 57; retained by British, 135, 141, 186, 187.
Cape Town, 58, 126.
Carlisle, Earl of, 33.
Carmarthen, Marquis of (Duke of Leeds), Foreign Secretary, 30, 52, 53, 56, 61, 82.
Cartwright, Rev. Edmund, 37.
Castlereagh, Viscount, 158, 169; Secretary for Ireland, 169; resignation, 176; and Catholic Emancipation, 177; and the India Board, 203; influenced by Pitt, 215.
Catharine II, 50; and Sweden, 59; and Turkish Empire, 59; the East, 62; the Coalition, 115; treaty with England and Austria, 125; death, 137.
Catholic Emancipation, 164, 167, 168, 172–174; postponed, 178, 198, 199, 203.
Cavendish, Lord John, 20, 24; resigns, 21.
Ceylon, 135, 141.
Charles X, 127.
Charlotte, Queen, favours Warren Hastings, 74; powers during Regency, 90.
Chatham, William Pitt, first Earl of, 1, 8, 12, 114, 115.
Chatham, John Pitt, second Earl of, 46, 122, 140; and Catholic Emancipation, 174, 178; the Cabinet (1804), 203.
Chathamites, the, 17.
Chauvelin, Marquis de, 105, 109, 110.
Cheit Singh, 75, 76.
Church Reform, 94.
Clarkson, Thomas, 97, 100.
Coal, duty on, 36.
Coalition, First, 115, 116, 120, 129, 158; Second, 158, 160.
Coalition Ministry, 23; the King, 24; fall of, 26; elections, 32.
Cobbett, William, 189.
Coburg, Duke of, 116.
Cochin, 135.
Colonies, British North America, 80; Australia, 80–81; trade with, 39.
Colonisation, Pitt's influence upon, 85.
Combination Acts, 151, 157.
Consols, in 1783–85, 28; lowness of, in 1791, 63; rise of, in 1785, 47; in 1789, 91; in 1804, 201.
Contades, Marquis de, 115.
Convict settlements, 80.
Copenhagen expedition, the, 180, 186.
Cornwallis, Earl, and Yorktown, 19; mission to Berlin, 52; against Second India Bill, 72; Master of Ordnance, 121; Pitt's peace measures, 140; Viceroy of Ireland, 165; Catholic Emancipation, 165, 168; resigns, 176.
Cornwallis, Sir William, vigil off Brest, 195.
"Cornys," 165.
Corporation Act, the, 93.
Corsica, occupied by Hood, 120; garrison reinforced, 126; offered to Russia, 137.
Craig, Sir John, 211.
Creevey, Thomas, quoted, 191, 204, 209, 210.
Crete, French designs upon, 58.
Crompton, Samuel, 37.
"Croppies," 171.
Curaçoa, captured, 161.

Demerara, 126, 215.
Denmark, attacks Sweden, 60.
Devonshire, Georgiana, Duchess of, supports Fox, 33.
Dissenters. *See* Nonconformists.
Dockyards, fortification of, 46.
Dublin Parliament, demands of, 39, 163.
Dumouriez, General, 109, 116.
Duncan, Admiral Lord, 143.
Dundas, Henry (Lord Melville), 23; Treasurer of the Navy, 30; in-

dictment of Warren Hastings, 73, 76; letter to Cornwallis, 77; peace measures, 140; resigns, 176; influence over Pitt, 155; First Lord of the Admiralty, 202; impeachment of, 208, 210.
Dunkirk, siege of, 117.
Dutch, the, cede Negapatam, 68; rights over Scheldt, 110, 111.
Dutch East India Company, the, 53.
Dutch Republic, civil war in 1787, 56; war with Great Britain (1795), 125; expedition to (1799), 159.

East India Company, administration of, 69; stock, 73.
Eastern Question, the, Pitt's foresight, 53; imminent collapse of Ottoman Empire, 58; crisis (1791), 59; Napoleon's Oriental campaign, 59; effects of, 60; Russian affairs, 62; Napoleon's further plans, 142.
Economic Reform, 15, 18, 34, 43.
Economy Bill (1781), 18.
Eden, Hon. Eleanor, 154.
Eden, William (Lord Auckland), 91; letter to Wellesley, 148; supports the Union, 166; aspersions on Pitt, 183.
Egypt, and France, 58, 59; Bonaparte invades, 151; Bonaparte fails in, 186.
Eldon, Lord (Sir John Scott), Chancellor of the Exchequer, 202.
Eliot, Edward J., with Pitt to France, 24; death, 154.
Eliott, George Augustus (Baron Heathfield), defends Gibraltar, 12.
Elliot, Hugh, 60.
Elliot, Sir Gilbert. *See* Minto, Lord.
England. *See* Great Britain.
Ewart, Joseph, 51.

Farington, Joseph, quoted, 178, 191.
Ferdinand of Brunswick, 114, 115.
Ferrol, 206, 208.
Fitzwilliam, Earl, 164.
Flood, Henry, 41, 94.
Foreign Affairs, 22, 49–67, 206.
Fox, Charles James, his youth, 16; Foreign Secretary, 20; introduces India Bill, 25; election for Westminster invalidated, 33–34; elected for Orkneys, 34; opposes India Bill, 35, 46; Pitt's naval policy, 63; East India Company, 69; Warren Hastings, 74; in Italy, 88; Libel Bill, 102; Income Tax, 150; the Prince of Wales, 194; attacks Addington, 196; dependence on Pitt, 197.
"Fox's martyrs," 33.
France, trade with, 38; supports Joseph II, 51; United Provinces, 52; Dutch East India Company, 53; silk, 55; Dutch intrigues, 58; finances (1787–8), 58; Crete and Egypt, 58, 59; treaty with Britain, 66; naval campaigns, 68; Canada, 83; rupture with England, 85; upheaval (1783–92), 92; anti-clericalism, 94; and Great Britain, 104–113; Republic established, 106; conquers Belgic Provinces, 106; war against Great Britain and Holland, 110; advance in Italy, 119; fleet (1793), 120; conquest of Holland, 123; peace, Prussia, 125; "natural frontiers," 132; rejects peace proposals, 133; retains colonies, 135; Belgium, 137; conditions of peace, 142; Dictatorship, 143; 18 Fructidor (1797), 143, 145; and Irish Catholics, 164; in Mediterranean, 158; ancient limits, 158; centralised despotism, 162; and Ireland, 170; colonies, 186; Treaty of Amiens, 189; Napoleonic autocracy, 196.
Francis, Sir Philip, opposes India Bill, 35; Hastings trial, 74.
Franking, abuses of, 37.
Frederic the Great, Joseph II, 50; England, 52; death, 56.
Frederick William II, accession, 56; United Provinces, 56, 57; Catharine II, 62; Russia, 93.
Free Trade, 171.
French Revolution, 61, 92, 104, 145.
French Royalists, 119, 128.

Gazetteer, The, 40.
George III, personal rule, 10; the Gordon Riots, 12; Parliament, 14; and Ministers, 15, 17; Shelburne, 21; United States, 21; Coalition, 24; electioneering, 33;

Pitt, 27, 48; United Provinces, 56–57; Warren Hastings, 74; and Prince of Wales, 87; lunacy, 87–90; Dr Willis, 88; recovery, 90–93; desire for peace, 106; war with France, 112, 113; Hanover, 126–127; attacked by mob, 132; Union with Ireland, 165; speech to United Parliament, 174; opposes Catholic Emancipation, 174–175; lunacy—and recovery, 178; Pitt's resignation, 175; Addington, 175; illnesses (1804), 194, 195, 196; offers Pitt Premiership, 199.
George IV, 87; Regent, 88; resumes Regency, 195.
Gibbon, Edward, 13.
Gibraltar, defence of, 12; relieved, 21, 142.
Girondins, the, 105.
Gladstone, W. E., 102, 103.
Goostree's Club, 19.
Gordon, Lord George, 12.
Gordon Riots, the, 12, 13, 44.
Gower, second Earl, 30.
Gower, third Earl, 105.
Grafton, Duke of, Privy Seal, 30.
Granby, Lord, 6.
Grattan, Henry, 41, 169.
"Grattan Parliament," the, 38.
Great Britain, isolation (1785), 52; treaty with France, 55; fleet to threaten France, 57; Prussia, 61; maritime power in North America, 82; war with France, 110; First Coalition, 116, 117, 120, 123; Catharine II, 125; West Indies, 123, 126; war declared by Dutch Republic, 125; withdraws troops from Hanover, 126; Hayti, 127; Spain, 137; supremacy in West Indies, 142; Gibraltar, 142; protects Naples, 157; her finance in 1797–8, 149; loses her allies, 151; the Helder, 159; Union with Ireland, 162, 163–181; fears invasion, 170, 171; peace with France, 184; trade in 1800, 185; Trinidad and Ceylon, 186; Treaty of Amiens, 185–188, 189; national defences, 196; Spain, 206–207; treaty with Russia, 211.
Grenville, William Wyndham (Lord Grenville), Paymaster of the Forces, 30; mission to the Hague and Paris, 57; the United States, 85; Home Secretary, 97; Slave Trade, 99; his dispatches, 112; Foreign Secretary, 66, 140, 144; peace measures, 186; opposes Addington, 196.
Grey, Charles (Earl Grey), 63; and Reform, 95, 133.
Guadaloupe, 21.
Gustavus III, 59, 60, 61.

Habeas Corpus Act, suspension of, 124.
Hammond, George, 85.
Hanover, 126, 127.
Hardy, Thomas, 124; his "Corresponding Society," 132.
Hargreaves, James, 37.
Harris, Sir James (Earl of Malmesbury), British Ambassador at the Hague, 51, 53, 55, 56, 111, 137; sent to Lille, 141, 143.
Harrowby, Earl of. *See* Ryder, Dudley.
Hastings, Warren, 68, 69; impeachment, 73–78.
Hawkesbury, Lord. *See* Liverpool, second Earl of.
Hayti, 127.
Heathfield, Baron. *See* Eliott, George Augustus.
Helder expedition, the, 159.
Hervilly, Comte d', 127, 128.
Hoche, General Lazare, 115.
Hohenzollerns, the, 63.
Holland, Province of, and France, 58; and Great Britain, 59; war with France, 110; conquest of, 123.
Hood, Alexander. *See* Bridport, Lord.
Hood, Lord, 34; takes Toulon, 119; and Corsica, 120.
Hotham, Admiral (Lord Hotham), 129, 134, 152.
Howe, Admiral Lord, relieves Gibraltar, 21; First Lord of the Admiralty, 44; resigns, 45; West Indies, 123.
Hythe military canal, 206.

Income Tax, 37, 149, 151.
India, and national finance, 35; and the French in, 69; Pitt, 69;

First India Bill, 70; administrative powers in, 71; Second India Bill, 71; sea-route to, 211.
Indian "nabobs," influence of, 26, 69.
Industrial Revolution, the, 37; its results, 38, 157.
Industry, centres of, 14.
"Influence," 47.
Invasion, precaution against, 170, 171, 192, 195, 206, 212.
Ireland, trade with, 38; taxation, 39, 172; Act of Union with, 162, 173; Union, 163–181; Catholics in, 166–168; Castlereagh, Chief Secretary, 169.
Iron industry, 37.

Jacobins, 142, 148.
Jay, John, 85.
Jemappes, battle of, 106.
Jenkinson, Charles. *See* Liverpool, first Earl of.
Jenkinson, Robert Banks. *See* Liverpool, second Earl of.
Jervis, Sir John. *See* St Vincent, Earl of.
Jones, Paul, 10.
Joseph II, alliance with Russia and Germany, 49; and Turkey, 59; death, 61.
Junius, 15.

Keith, Sir Robert Murray, British Ambassador at Vienna, 51.
Keppel, Admiral Lord, 22, 24.
"King's Friends," the, 12, 13, 17.

Lageard, Abbé de, 24.
Langara, Admiral, 119.
Lansdowne, Marquis of. *See* Shelburne, Earl of.
League of the Armed Neutrals, the, 158.
Lecky, W. E. H., quoted, 167, 170, 174, 177.
Leeds, Duke of. *See* Carmarthen, Marquis of.
Leopold II, accession, 61; and Turks, 62.
Libel Bill (1791), 102.
Lille, negotiations at, 141–3.
Liverpool, first Earl of (Charles Jenkinson), 40, 46; and peace measures, 140; Catholic Emancipation, 174, 176.
Liverpool, second Earl of (Lord Hawkesbury), 175; and peace measures, 184–185; Home Secretary, 202.
Lonsdale, Lord. *See* Lowther, Sir James.
Loughborough, Lord (Alexander Wedderburn), 90, 111, 140, 174.
Louis XVI, 109.
Louis XVII. *See* Provence, Comte de.
Lowther, Sir James (Lord Lonsdale), 13.
Loyalists, 81, 83, 84.

Macaulay, Lord, 76.
Macaulay, Zachary, 97.
Mallet du Pan, Jacques, 147, 148.
Malmesbury, Lord. *See* Harris, Sir James.
Malta, 186, 189, 212.
Manchester and Irish Trade, 41.
Mangalore, treaty of, 68.
Martello towers, 206.
Martin, Admiral Byam, 44, 45.
Martinique, 126.
Masséna, 115.
Mediterranean, Addington's policy in, 190.
Melville, Lord. *See* Dundas, Henry.
Michelet, Jules, 157.
Middleton, Sir Charles. *See* Barham, Lord.
Minto, Earl of (Sir Gilbert Elliot), 111, 176.
Mitchell, Admiral, 159.
Moore, Sir John, 192, 193.
Morley, Lord, quoted, 177.
Mornington, Earl of, 168.
Mulgrave, Lord, 30, 203.

Naples, and England, 157; and Coalition, 115, 118, 123.
Napoleon Bonaparte, 2, 5; Oriental campaign, 59; in Italy, 136; Oriental conquest, 142; his offer of peace refused, 160; Pitt's feeling against, 161; and British sea power, 185; Pitt's estimate of his character, 189; gives up idea of invading England, 195; Emperor, 202; and Dutch, 205; instigates British rupture with

Spain, 207; fails in Mediterranean, 211.
National Debt, the, 35, 36.
Nationality, 159.
Nautilus, H.M.S., voyage of, 81.
Navy, the, 11, 29, 44; and Triple Alliance, 59, 65, 69, 117; withdrawn from Mediterranean, 136; after Camperdown, 143, 191, 205, 210, 212.
Necker, Jacques, 25.
Negapatam, 68.
Nelson, Horatio, Viscount, in the Mediterranean, 152, 158; depreciates Malta, 187; off Toulon, 195; Trafalgar, 211, 212.
Netherlands, Belgic. *See* Belgic Provinces.
Nichols, General, 152.
Nile, battle of the, 158, 186.
Nonconformists, 93.
Nootka Sound, 59, 82.
North, Frederick, Lord, 7, 18, 19, 31.

Oczakoff, fortress, 63.
Orde, Thomas (Lord Bolton), Chief Secretary for Ireland, 39.
Ottoman Empire. *See* Turkey.

Pacific, the, 62, 80, 82, 83.
Paine, Thomas, his *Rights of Man*, 95, 107.
Parliament, Reform of, 29–48; in Ireland, 39; representation in, 14, 29, 94.
Parnell, Sir John, 169.
Patronage. *See* Influence.
Paul, Emperor of Russia, 162.
Phillip, Captain, 81, 82.
Pitt, Harriet, 2, 3.
Pitt, Hester, 2.
Pitt, James, 2.
Pitt, John. *See* Chatham, second Earl of.
Pitt, William. *See* Chatham, Earl of.
Pitt, William, the younger, early life, 1–4; at Cambridge, 8; at Lincoln's Inn, 8, 12; and Gibbon, 13; enters Parliament, 13; and Reform, 13, 24; his first speech, 18; described by Wellesley, 19; Septennial Act, 20; Chancellor of the Exchequer, 21; and Shelburne, 22; defends Peace of Versailles, 23; on Fox, 25; India Bills, 25, 29; refuses office, 27; reconciles King and people, 28; reconstruction of Parliament, 29–48; represents Cambridge University, 34; and National Debt, 35; and Revenue, 36; national industry, 38; Free Trade with Ireland, 39; Board of Trade, 40; Irish proposals, 41–42; American War, 43; the Navy, 44–46, 117, 210, 212; reverses in 1785–6, 46; and finance, 47; Foreign Affairs (1785–1791), 49–67; and British India, 68–80; and Australia, 80–82; and Canada, 83; attitude towards Warren Hastings, 74; the Regency, 89–90; the Slave Trade, 97; opposes Grey, 95, 96; Reform, 98–99; and party politics, 101; Warden of Cinque Ports, 106; and French supremacy, 107, 108; and war with France, 111, 114–129; efforts for peace, 130–146; Peace Congress, 133; taxation, 148, 149–151; climax of career, 152; duel with Tierney, 153, 155; private life, 153–155; children in industry, 157; Second Coalition, 158; suggested reconstruction of Europe, 158; and the Helder, 159; and Union with Ireland, 163–172; resigns, 175, 177, 178; retirement, 182; ill-health, 184; peace terms, 186, 187; re-entry into Ministry, 193; attacks Addington, 196; Army Reserve Act, 197; resumes Premiership, 200; new Cabinet, 202; supported by Commons, 203; and the Army, 204; war policy, 208; health fails, 212, 213; death, 214; personal influence, 215.
Place, Francis, 148.
"Pocket boroughs," 13, 42, 43, 134.
Poland, and Triple Alliance, 61; and Prussia, 116; Third Partition, 123; final spoliation of, 131.
Port Jackson, 82.
Portland, Duke of, 23, 90; and the Slave Trade, 101, 102, 111; and Catholic Emancipation, 174, 203.

Portugal, and the Coalition of 1793, 115.
Press-gang, the, 118.
Pretyman, Dr. *See* Tomline, Bishop.
Prisons, 80.
Provence, Comte de, 119.
Prussia, alliance with Great Britain, 50–51, 59, 61; supports Sweden, 60; designs on Poland, 116; and Third Partition, 123; unreliability in war, 115, 120, 122, 123, 125, 215; peace with France, 125; defection of, 213.
Puisaye, Comte de, 127.

Quakers, the, 33; and the Slave Trade, 97.
Quebec Act (1774), 83.
Quiberon expedition, 118, 127, 128.

Regency, the, 87, 88, 195.
Reichenbach, Conference of, 61.
Richmond, Duke of, 21, 22, 30; Master of Ordnance, 46, 118.
Rockingham, Marquis of, 15, 21.
Rodney, Lord, 21.
Romilly, Sir Samuel, quoted, 20, 128.
Rose, George, 40, 121, 175, 181, 203.
Rousseau, Jean Jacques, 44.
Roux, Charles, 58.
Royalist League, the, 131.
Russia, and Sweden, 61; and Balance of Power, 63; and Poland, 123; the Helder, 159; treaty with Great Britain, 211; designs on Malta, 212; Austerlitz, 213. *See* Catharine II, and Paul.
Rutland, Duke of, 30, 39.
Ryder, Dudley (Earl of Harrowby), 99; Foreign Secretary, 202; mission to Berlin, 214.

Sackville, Viscount (Lord G. Germain), 30.
St Lucia, 126, 188, 215.
St Vincent, Earl of, in Mediterranean, 137, 152; at Admiralty, 180, 185, 187, 193, 194; criticised by Middleton, 205.
Sandwich, Earl of, 11, 44.
Saratoga, 8.
Sardinia, 115, 119, 123.
Sayer, James, 26.
Scheldt, the, 106, 110, 111, 112.
Scott, Sir John. *See* Eldon, Lord.
Scott, Major, 73.
Sea Power, 184–185, 215.
Septennial Act, the, 20.
Sheffield, Lord, 88.
Shelburne, Earl of (Marquis of Lansdowne), 20; Premier, 21; resigns, 22, 23.
Sheridan, Richard Brinsley, accuses Hastings, 74; and Quiberon, 128; plea for personal liberty, 148; and Income Tax, 150, 151; and Helder expedition, 160; and Union of Ireland, 166.
Sidmouth, Lord. *See* Addington, Henry.
Sinking Fund, the, 36.
Slave Question, the, 96, 97, 155.
Smith, Adam, 7, 12, 38, 84.
Smuggling, 36.
Sorel, Albert, 58, 179.
Soubise, Prince de, 115.
Spain declares war, 11; and Nootka Sound, 59, 82; claims in Pacific, 62; and the Coalition, 115, 119, 120, 123, 125, 134; war with Great Britain, 137; controlled by Napoleon, 205; rupture with (1804), 205.
Spencer, Lord, opposes Pitt, 90; resigns, 176; on peace measures, 186, 187.
Spencer Papers, The, 126, 159, 161.
Staël, Madame de, 25.
Stanhope, Lady Hester, 184, 192.
Stanley, Lord, 99.
Suffren, Commodore, 68.
Surinam, 215.
Surrey, Lord, 33.
Sweden, alliance with Turkey, 60; and Triple Alliance, 61. *See* Gustavus III.
Sydney, Lord, Home Secretary, 80.

Taxation, 36, 149–151; in Ireland, 172.
Tea, duty on, 36.
Temple, Earl, 29, 31.
Test Act, proposed repeal of, 93.
Thurlow, Lord, Lord Chancellor, 20, 30; opposes abolition of slavery, 97, 99.
Tierney, George, and the Income

Tax, 151; duel with Pitt, 153 155.
Tippoo Sahib, 68, 72.
Tobago, capture of, 126.
Tomline, George Pretyman, Bishop of Lincoln, 4, 8, 182.
Toulon, 119, 157.
Trade, growth of, 38, 39, 40, 85, 126, 127, 171, 185.
Trafalgar, battle of, 211, 212.
Trincomalee, 53, 57, 58, 68.
Trinidad, 126, 141, 188.
Triple Alliance, the (1688), 106.
Triple Alliance, the (1788), 59, 60, 61, 66.
Turin, 132.
Turkey, proposed conquest of, 50, 51; collapse imminent, 58; and Sweden, 60; and Eastern crisis, 59.
Twiss, Colonel, 206.

Ulm, battle of, 212.
United Empire Loyalists. *See* Loyalists.
United Provinces. *See* Dutch Republic.
United States, Declaration of Independence, 7; recognised by George III, 21; commerce with, 84; and Great Britain, 10, 84.

Valenciennes, 116.
Valetta, 161.
Vancouver Island, 82.
Vergennes, Comte de, 56.
Versailles, Peace of (1783), 23, 24.
Villeneuve, Admiral, 211.
Volunteers, the, 192, 193, 204, 205.

Walpole, Horace, 10.
Washington, George, 43, 85.
Watt, James, 37.
Wedderburn, Alexander. *See* Loughborough, Lord.
Wellesley, Marquis (Earl of Mornington), 19, 168; returns from India, 213.
Wesley, John, 97.
West Africa, 80.
West Indies, 99, 117, 123, 126, 137, 142; French, 100.
Westmorland, Earl of, 163; and Catholic Emancipation, 174; in Pitt's last Cabinet, 203.
Whigs, the, 17, 95.
Wilberforce, William, estimate of Pitt, 6, 19; visits France with Pitt, 24; in Commons, 46; Hastings trial, 75; Slave Trade, 97, 100, 101; influence on Pitt, 155; on Pitt's retirement, 179.
Wilhelmina, sister of Frederick William II., 56.
Willis, Rev. Dr, 88.
Wilson, Rev. Edward, 3, 5.
Windham, William, 111; resigns, 176; on peace measures, 186, 187.
Wraxall, Sir Nathaniel, quoted, 18, 41, 42, 80.
Wray, Sir Cecil, 34.
Wyvill, Rev. Christopher, 14, 42.

Yellow fever, 127.
York, Duke of, 121, 122.
Yorktown, 19.
Young, Sir George, 81.

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